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WALLACE LETTER: Full Text

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WHAT WALLACE REALLY SAID

THE replacement of Mr. Wallace by Mr. Harriman ends the immediate crisis in America. Mr. Byrnes, who, despite Mr. Roosevelt's wishes, substituted Mr. Truman for Mr. Wallace as the Vice-Presidential candidate in 1943, has defeated his rival again; he has secured in his place a Secretary of Commerce who can claim to be a Rooseveltian but will accept Mr. Byrnes' lead with genuine conviction. Moreover, the President, whose Babbitt-like incompetence was demonstrated as never before, can feel satisfied that he has the approval of the American people, whose present mood is a blend of Jingoism and Red-baiting. If last week's events ensure a Republican victory next November, it can be predicted that a Republican majority in Congress will outdo Mr. Byrnes in anti-Bolshevist enthusiasm. So far as America is concerned, the course is set.

It is vital that the British people should understand precisely what the issue is between Mr. Wallace and Mr. Byrnes. Our newspapers, despite their increase in size, have none of them found space for more than the briefest summary, either of his speech in New York, or of his letter to the President. He has been presented—on the score of two paragraphs in his speech which actually denounced Mr. Dewey's proposals for an Anglo-American alliance—as an Isolationist, advising a peace-loving America to keep clear of British Imperialism. Others have called him a near-Communist and a religious fanatic with no sense of reality. How far these fantastic descriptions are from the truth can be seen from his letter to the President. In view of its importance, we are printing the full text this week in the columns usually devoted to correspondence.

From his place inside the Cabinet, Mr. Wallace came to the conclusion that America is deliberately moving towards a head-on collision with Russia. He observed the colossal size of American armaments—including, according to official revelations, active preparations not only for atomic but also for bacteriological warfare. He noted the construction of air and naval bases, thousands of miles from the U.S.A., which could only be used for operations against Russia. He knew from inside the anxiety of certain naval and military advisers for a preventive war. Through his departmental responsibilities he was intimately concerned with the struggle for oil in the Middle East. Finally, and most important, he was aware of Mr. Byrnes' conviction that the right way to handle the Russians is not to seek an understanding with them, but to organise a concentration of power sufficient to "call their bluff" and "make them toe the line."

It was against this policy that Mr. Wallace felt it his duty to protest. Mr. Byrnes believes that American toughness will save the peace; Mr. Wallace that it will make war certain.

But Mr. Wallace did not only protest. He put forward alternative proposals. In his letter he suggested that the existence of spheres of influence in which each Great Power has a paramount interest should be frankly recognised—not least by the U.S.A., which has based its foreign policy on this principle for a hundred years. For America to claim this principle for herself and to deny it to Russia is tantamount to putting the whole world under the Monroe Doctrine. Mr. Wallace went on to make concrete suggestions for the control of atomic armaments and the improvement of American-Russian economic relations; and on the basis of these proposals he called for a new attempt by all parties to break down suspicions and achieve a settlement, not by force, but by agreement.

We believe that if the British people had the chance of reading Mr. Wallace's letter, nine out of ten of them would agree wholeheartedly, both with his strictures on American policy and with his positive proposals. But Mr. Wallace's moderation is so out of line with Mr. Byrnes' policy and with the bellicose tone of American opinion, that he has been dismissed from the Cabinet and even forbidden to speak on a Democratic platform.

Perhaps the greatest value to this country of the whole affair is that it has revealed authoritatively and for the first time what the American Government is up to. By repudiating Mr. Wallace, Mr. Truman has made it clear beyond doubt that the Administration is determined to continue the dangerous policy of Mr. Byrnes. Its aim is not a settlement by compromise, but to insist upon an American peace in every part of the world. This involves a real risk of war, because the Russians, faced with this American attitude, refuse to compromise and insist upon a Russian peace.

But Mr. Byrnes realises that his plan of campaign entirely depends on the co-operation of the British Commonwealth. The *Pax Americana* can only be dictated by an Anglo-American bloc. Hence the paradox of the support given by former Isolationists to the British alliance, and Mr. Wallace's attack upon it. Mr. Wallace desires Big Three co-operation: Mr. Byrnes, British assistance in defeating Russia—if possible without a war.

It rests, therefore, with the British Government to decide whether Mr. Byrnes' plan will be carried out. He can defeat Mr. Wallace inside the Cabinet, but if Britain refuses to play the role which he allots to her, he will have to fall back on an attempt to reach a peaceful understanding. Holding the balance of power, Britain can decide the issue between Wallace and Byrnes.

What is the British reaction? At Zurich Mr. Churchill elaborated his Fulton speech in favour of an Anglo-American Bloc, but added to it a Franco-German Bloc, which would presumably protect Europe against Bolshevism under the ægis of the *Pax Americana*. Does Mr. Churchill speak for his party? Mr. Eden, this week, contradicted his leader and argued substantially the Wallace line with his customary skill and moderation. Meanwhile, Downing Street is silent. Does silence in this instance mean consent?

It is essential that the British attitude should be expressed without equivocation. Mr. Byrnes has stated his position. Marshal Stalin, in an interview with Mr. Werth, has welcomed Mr. Wallace's proposals in conciliatory terms. Mr. Bevin has an unrivalled opportunity by one single speech to make war impossible. At Fulton Mr. Churchill outlined America's policy and gained Presidential approval. Let Mr. Bevin return the compliment and state that British policy is firmly based on the Wallace letter.

Big Power Dissonance

Broadcast as it was for internal consumption, Stalin's "reassuring" interview may have been intended to check excessive development of the "hardening" of Russian opinion to which our Moscow correspondent has drawn attention. Whether it will lead in practice to more accommodating relations between the U.S.S.R. and the Anglo-American Bloc is problematic. As we write, the week's political news from abroad consists of little more than variations *da capo* on the strident theme of Big Power disunity. In Paris, the four Foreign Ministers have reached a new agreement on procedure: the Peace Conference is to wind up definitely on October 15th; any loose ends will subsequently be tied up by the Big Four themselves at a meeting scheduled tentatively for New York; and after that they will begin consideration of the problem of Germany. It seems probable that there will be plenty of loose ends. The Balkan Economic Commission still makes no headway; and, though the British have now agreed that the Trieste Executive Council should be elected, deadlock continues over the powers of the Governor, while the South-Eastern European atmosphere goes on being thickened by recriminatory Anglo-American Notes to Belgrade and by a further American protest to Russia about Hungary. In Germany, the British and Americans, observing the discomfiture of the United Socialist Party at Mr. Molotov's uncompromising defence of the present Polish frontier, have raised their bid in the Big Power auction for German support: calories in both the British and American Zones go up to 1500. Finally, in the sterile debates of the Security Council, Britain and America have succeeded in enlisting the votes of a majority against the not unreasonable Soviet proposal that all members of the United Nations should furnish details of the military establishments now being maintained outside their own territories. We question whether this was a victory worth winning. Stalin may be right to distinguish between irresponsible war talk and a real threat of imminent hostilities; but the refusal of the Anglo-American Bloc to say how many troops they have in China, the Middle East, Greece, Iceland, and in Pacific Island bases is a bad way of countering Russian propaganda.

Australian Elections

Forecasts suggest that the Australian elections on Saturday will result in a renewed, but perhaps diminished, majority for Mr. Chifley's Labour Party. His control of the Senate, where Labour held 21 seats, against 15 for the Liberal and Country Parties combined, seems assured, since only four Labour seats fall vacant at this election, whereas the whole of the Opposition seats are contested. In the House of Representatives the present position is: Labour 49, Liberal and Country 25, Independent 1. The gain of 13 seats which the Opposition Parties require to win control would involve a surprisingly large swing-over of votes. Tax reduction and a "Front" against the Communists have formed main planks in the Opposition Parties' electoral platform, though the underlying issue has been social reform *versus* freedom for enterprise. An imponderable in the election is the extent to which the Australian Labour Party, with its middle-of-the-road policy, has forfeited the support of some of the militant, Left-inclined trade unions, such as the miners, iron-workers, and long-shore men. There is a factional struggle in the unions between the Communists and the Catholic Action group; but the Australian system of preferential voting should assist Mr. Chifley, since the second preferences of Communist supporters will tend to go to Labour. To its Left critics the Labour Party's answer is that the Constitution gives the Federal Government insufficient power to deal with either social services or economic planning. Simultaneously with the election, Referenda are being put to voters providing for three amendments to the Constitution in order to permit the Government to legislate with respect to social services, organised marketing of primary products, and terms and conditions of employment in industry. If the answers are negative—and Australia is a country with strong State traditions—it is possible that Labour will be returned to office but without the power it requires to implement its promised programme of gradual social reform.

World Food Board

Sir John Orr has been given the job of pacemaker for the Preparatory Commission which will study in detail the World Food Board which he demanded. It is due to assemble in Washington at the end of October, and is to explore how to achieve the nutritional objectives approved at Copenhagen. Sir John, who so far has shown a genius for making sceptical nations and conflicting, even hostile interests work to his ends, will have the steering of that Commission, the submission of the proposals to Governments and the reconvening of the F.A.O. conference. His own time-table sets next autumn as the "deadline" for the creation of the World Food Board. That may be optimistic, but it is anticipating the wind-up of the International Emergency Food Council at the end of 1947; and we do not want, on the allocations side, what has happened on relief with the untimely end of Unrra. By arrangement with La Guardia, F.A.O. will take over at the end of this year the agricultural rehabilitation functions of Unrra and mitigate some of the confusion. After the unusual harmony of the Copenhagen Conference—phenomenal in these days of international meetings—there is some feeling that the agreements were too glib, a sort of shamefaced concession to the personality and glowing idealism of Orr himself. Certainly the developments in the U.S., with the victory of the State Department, intransigently hostile to the World Food Board, over Wallace, its warm supporter, introduces a disturbing factor. Orr is determined to win over Russia and wants to go to Moscow for that purpose.

Trade Talks

Preparations are now far advanced for next months' international trade talks which are designed to smooth the way for next year's full-dress Conference on International Trade. Consultations between this country and the Dominions have been proceeding for some time, and there will be formal talks in London before the international meeting opens. British hurry to conclude Trade Pacts with as many countries as possible has not been unconnected with the imminence of the international gathering. When this meets, it will inevitably be left to the Americans to make most of the running in the early stages. They have tabled the detailed Trade Proposals published last year, and have compelled the British Government to promise its support in advance as a condition of getting the American loan. What this and other countries now want to know is what the "Proposals" mean in practical terms of a willingness on the part of the United States both to lower its own tariff barriers, and to give up the forms of discrimination—for example, in relation to shipping—to which it is itself addicted. The other matter about which enlightenment is most wanted is the attitude of the Soviet Union, which has so far not been defined at all—or even foreshadowed. It seems impossible that the Soviet Union can be willing to accept the American condition that State Trading Agencies shall buy and sell only at the prices which would prevail in a free, competitive market. On the other hand the Americans have suggested no way in which this condition could practicably be enforced; and in other respects the "Proposals," whether so intended or not, appear to work out more favourably to complete State trading than to any sort of State control of private trading, either by direct or by indirect financial methods. These considerations make the Soviet attitude very difficult indeed to predict. It is to our interest that the Soviet Union should take a stiff, anti-American line; for that is our best line of escape from having to implement the American "Proposals," which we are pledged to support at the Conference, but not to carry out unless the Americans, in their turn, take a liberal course over their own restrictions, or unless other countries are pledged to carry them out as well as ourselves.

After the Squatters

The squatters' movement was undoubtedly a much-needed stimulant. It gave a good many dilatory or reactionary local authorities a considerable fright; it has probably speeded up the release of requisitioned property and camps, 718 of which are to be released; and it has put Mr. Bevan on his mettle to get as many new houses as possible ready for occupation by the end of the year. Though it was inevitable that the Government should take a strong stand against the movement, a touch of illegal direct action sometimes proves itself a useful element in the conduct of constitutional government. Even to those who championed most vigorously the rights of property, this episode must have brought home the human meaning of the acute scarcity of houses. More than anything else, it emphasises the vital role that housing progress will play in popular judgment on the Government's record. Foreign affairs may crowd domestic politics from the headlines, but the average citizen cares a good deal more about houses than peace treaties, and his confidence in Labour administration will depend upon his conviction that everything is being done to provide them.

The Building Drive

Mr. Bevan's immediate response has been a promise to check up more closely on the leakage of labour and materials both to illegal and non-essential work, and to start a drive to complete all houses now up to roof level by the end of the year. On paper, the long-term figures look impressive. Of an ultimate target of 750,000 houses, 437,000 are already "in hand or projected." In fact, some 134,000 permanents and 28,000 tempories are now being built, apart from the 20,000 permanents and 40,000 temporaries already finished. If Mr. Bevan can get the builders to reach his new target by the beginning of January, another 30,000 council houses and a substantial number of those being erected by private builders will be ready for occupation. But though top priority in labour and material is to be given to this work, reaching the target will involve a much higher rate of completion than hitherto. There is evidence in Mr. Bevan's figures for the argument, which we advanced last week, that the rate of building is far slower on council houses than those for private sale. The elimination of shortages and the planned use of skilled labour, even the introduction of the long-needed system of priorities, will not be enough to ensure that the target is reached or that housing construction can be accelerated next year. The Government still shows no sign of facing the basic question of incentives. Until a speed-up all round is secured, successes in one sector are gained only at the expense of retreats in others.

The Miners' Meat

The mine workers' demand for an additional meat ration and for the extension to surface workers of the additional ration of cheese appears to be eminently reasonable; and it is not easy to see why the Trades Union Congress at first objected to it. In some industries the ordinary rations can be effectively supplemented for most workers by the supply of canteen meals; but there are exceptional difficulties in the way of these in the case of a great many miners, and even if it is true that the miners' families are certain

in practice to get a share in any extra rations that may be provided, that is not at all a sufficient reason for turning the demand down. It would be well worth while to let the miners' wives and children get rather more food if thereby the country could secure an addition to the present output of coal. The statement recently made by the electricity companies and by some other big coal consumers may have been intentionally alarmist; but there is no doubt at all that coal is going to be in very short supply this winter, and that industrial recovery is liable to be held up by the shortage. As an incentive, the miners need something tangible to go on with while they are waiting for the new Coal Board to take over and begin its major measures of reorganisation—the more so because some of these measures are bound to be unpopular.

Dentists and Doctors Object

The so-called "dentists' strike" is in fact a refusal, urged by all the dentists' associations, to accept the new terms of service for panel dentists under the old Health Insurance scheme. Dental benefit, under this scheme, being only an "additional benefit" which approved societies are under no obligation to provide, extends to only a fraction of the insured population; and a great many dentists are not directly parties to the dispute, because they do not in fact take panel patients. But behind the quarrel is the whole question of the terms of service to be made applicable to dentists under the new Health Service, when it comes into being. This question, as far as it concerns rates of remuneration, is now under consideration by the Spens Committee, which recently reported on doctors' fees; and the Ministry of Health argues that nothing can be done on the general question until this Committee has reported. Meanwhile, however, the dentists resent Mr. Griffiths's action in rejecting the report of the joint committee, on which the Ministry itself is represented, and are telling dentists not to accept panel service except on the conditions which this body proposed. This dispute is also complicated by the dentists' objection to the present N.H.I. regulations. These they say, allow them too little freedom in providing the treatment which they claim to be needed. The doctors are also at loggerheads with Mr. Griffiths about the proposed new N.H.I. rates of pay, which they regard as inadequate, and it looks as if there may be an attempt on their part also to boycott the new scales.

The Third Programme

The new B.B.C. programme, which goes on the air nightly from this Sunday, is an avowed experiment. Mr. Barnes and his colleagues, unencumbered by precedents or normal radio routine, have aimed high. The programmes they plan to present will make considerable demands upon the discipline and attention of the listener. They are not intended to appeal either to the casual audience or the lover of background noise. Five hours of *Tristan and Isolde*, or an evening of *Man and Superman*, can be appreciated only by those who have made a fixed appointment with their wireless as binding as the purchase of seats at Covent Garden or the Old Vic. Not all the programmes, of course, will run to these lengths. The serious listener can always find time for a symphony concert, a poetry reading or a recital of chamber music, and the Third Programme will give him a more ample choice of these than he has ever before enjoyed in Britain. The new programme may raise the level of radio taste, but most of its audience, unhappily, do not belong to that vast public who switch on the wireless as automatically as the light. From now on, dramatic critics will be allowed on the air to discuss the performances in the Third Programme itself. We hope that Mr. Barnes will soon extend his hospitality to bona-fide radio critics and permit them to range over all his programmes at least. But free religious and agnostic comment is still banned from Portland Place.

REORIENTATIONS: The Razor's Edge

THE Cabinet crisis in America has reminded us of the inherent instability of American policy. Bismarck, with reference to Great Britain, once remarked on the danger of relying on an alliance with a democracy, whose policy could be reversed by a change of government. The constitution of the U.S.A. sanctifies this uncertainty by forbidding the concentration of power. As a result, American foreign policy is formed by an explosive series of domestic conflicts which can be controlled only by the personality of a great President.

Instability in foreign policy is not an American peculiarity. Faced with the uncertainties of a post-war world, and the acute internal pressures of reconstruction, every Power, great or small, is liable to sudden and unpredictable deviations from consistency. Russian policy seems steady, largely because inner disagreements are concealed; but there is every reason to believe that the Wallace-Byrnes dispute has its counterpart in the Politbureau, as it certainly does in the British Cabinet. In the Kremlin, no less than in Washington and London, there is the conflict between the pessimists whose distrust of "the aggressor nation" makes them incapable of negotiating a lasting agreement, and the optimists, who are willing to sacrifice a good deal of "security" in order to remove suspicions on the other side. The argument is all the more bitter since neither optimist nor pessimist can prove his case. Decisions are usually an uneasy compromise, between rival "hunches." In such a situation it is absurd to base our policy on the assumption that either American or Russian policy is fixed and unalterable. British policy, at least for some years to come, should take as its model, not the self-righteous pugnacity of Palmerston, but the caution and moderation of Wellington's campaigns.

The British Cabinet is indeed on the razor's edge, balanced between the precipices of defenceless isolation and a fatal alliance; between a "Little England" retreat from world obligations and a braggart attempt to shore up an Empire; between a sell-out to the Right and appeasement of the U.S.S.R. The middle way of democratic Socialism is difficult enough in domestic affairs: in international relations it demands a combination of firm conviction and mental elasticity, of hard negotiating capacity and political imagination, of toughness and human understanding, which is extremely rare. So far we have failed, not because the Cabinet has been extemporising—that was inevitable—but because its expedients were based on no principles at all.

In previous articles we have indicated the principles on which a Socialist foreign policy must be based, and the redefinition of "vital interests" which the application of such principles involves. But no one from outside the Foreign Office can produce a blue-print of policy, without laying himself open to ridicule; and the permanent officials can only too easily accept a policy in general terms and completely stultify it in its detailed application. In foreign policy, especially in a period of flux, the day to day decisions are often determinants of principle. Members of the Cabinet, who have no departmental responsibility for external affairs, are unable to intervene effectively in discussion of foreign policy because the basic principles are submerged in daily routine. A long series of *ad hoc* decisions, on none of which a point of principle seems to be involved, produces finally a result in flagrant violation of their convictions. The Cabinet is collectively responsible, but it has never had the chance to decide anything—until it finds itself committed.

The only way to stop this drift is for the Prime Minister to order that a series of "directives" for external affairs should be prepared by relevant Departments, discussed at length in the Cabinet and then laid down as binding Cabinet policy. Such directives, stating our aims in order of priority, and defining the Cabinet's attitude to the most difficult problems in each field, would have a really startling effect in the administration, for instance, of the British Zone of Germany and of our West African colonies. At present the officials are ineffective, partly at least because, faced with a myriad problems, they are provided by the Cabinet with a picture neither of the job to be done, nor of the tempo required, nor of the order of importance of the various parts of the programme. Hence the listlessness and aimlessness of men who have so much to do, so little to do it with, and so vague an idea of what it is all about that finally they invent paper work to keep themselves busy.

What should such Cabinet directives contain? The first would lay down the central aim of our policy; the strengthening of democratic Socialism, both by positive support in areas where our influence can be direct, and negatively by doing everything possible to frustrate the drift into two world Blocs. The second would define the principle of "concentration of effort," laying out in order of priority our vital interests and indicating the areas to which primary attention must be given. The third and most important would explain the attitude to be adopted in Whitehall and overseas to the conflict of ideologies. It would expose the dangers of a one-sided opposition to Communism, and the futility of "non-political neutrality." The British diplomat represents not only his country but a positive faith opposed to the dogmas of both Communism and anti-Bolshevism. He must regard *both* as reactionary forces, incapable of establishing world government by consent and opposed to humanity and reason. It is his task to fight them, not by blank opposition, but by proposing constructive solutions which neither can reject without forfeiting popular support. He must remember that the two ideologies are backed by far greater force than his government possesses. If it comes to a showdown, democratic Socialism loses. He must prevent the showdown and mobilise in his support the chief force at his disposal, the popular demand for both bread and freedom. Britain must represent the real desires of the common man.

It may be argued that such a directive is sentimental. But the "realistic" alternatives are infinitely more romantic. Our best security is to set an example of rational moderation in a world of ruthlessness and insanity, keeping our own balance and helping others to maintain theirs between the ideological precipices.

In carrying out this Socialist policy, the motives of action are almost more important than the action itself. Because our motives were honest in India, the "failure" of the Cabinet Mission redounded to our credit and relieved the tension throughout the Far East. In contrast, no one trusts us in the Middle East because we have felt constrained to conceal the motives of a policy which has little to do with democracy or Socialism.

Granted, however, the existence of such Cabinet directives, something else would remain to be done. Success depends on the character and convictions of the men who represent us. Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill directed that there should be Anglo-American unity of command. A handful of men like Eisenhower and Harold MacMillan by their personal example made that directive a reality and ruthlessly dismissed those who failed to follow their example.

The same thing applies to Socialist foreign policy. It must be carried out, at all the key points, by men who express it in their personalities. Not more than a dozen appointments in the Foreign Office, Colonial Office and Service Ministries, and in a few positions overseas in areas like the Middle East, West Africa and Germany, would be sufficient. Most civil servants are quick to imitate the example of those on whom preferment depends.

At present the Cabinet in relation to external affairs—including strategy—is in the hands of the Departments. Its policy is nothing more

than the traditional and uncoordinated reaction of these institutions to current events. British Socialism is represented all over the world by men who, in a strictly non-political way, are opposed to every Socialist principle and are hot-gospellers of the anti-Bolshevik ideologies. And Cabinet policy is based on the information which these men provide. Mr. Bevin is well satisfied with their loyalty, and no wonder! They have found in him an admirer of the institution which is their whole being.

Any attempt to remedy this would fail if the Cabinet were content simply to formulate a directive. The institutions themselves must be remodelled, and this depends on the introduction, at a high executive level, of a few men who really believe in the new policy. In establishing the Coal Board, Mr. Shinwell selected men who really believed in nationalisation. No one has accused him of introducing a spoils system!

But when this has been said, it remains true that the primary need is for a recognition by the Government of the reasons for its lamentable record in external affairs. In the case of previous Labour Governments, failure on the domestic side has been partially recompensed by successes abroad. This time the position is reversed. A remarkably effective beginning of domestic reconstruction has been accompanied by a foreign and imperial policy, which, apart from India, has been incompetent even by Coalition standards. Mr. Churchill at least has a policy. Mr. Bevin slithers out of one expedient into another, and has achieved a situation where the American anti-Bolshevists and the Greek Royalists are his only wholehearted supporters. The Foreign Office finds Mr. Bevin more "realistic" than Arthur Henderson. But his old-fashioned Socialist convictions never brought us to this plight.

BRITAIN CAN MAKE IT!

EVERY summer before the war I used to go dutifully to the British Industries Fair, exhausting feet, eyes and temper along mile after mile of so-called goods, the vast majority as ill-displayed as they were ill-designed. Many of the patterns were late-Victorian; and when an attempt at "modernity" was evident, the results were even worse. The sections given to the textile and plastic industries used to provide comparatively painless interludes, but the china, the glass, the furniture, the carpets, were almost always of an ugliness that made one despair of one's country, if not of mankind. Nor was this ugliness due usually to the pursuit of cheapness. On the contrary, most of the more atrocious exhibits were highly priced; china moulded to the most improbable shapes, iridescent with the most elaborate glazes and hand-painted with hideous ingenuity; sideboards eruptive with carving and cancerous with inlay; glass that had suffered the Chinese torture of the Thousand Cuts. For what market these monstrosities were intended I could never discover. No educated person could conceivably endure them—and, apart from a few rulers, the innocent savages must find them too expensive. Shop windows in our cities suggested that there was a demand for them among the newly enriched English, but the notion of exporting them to Europe or the United States seemed a chimera explicable only by the complacent provincialism of the manufacturers.

On Monday I emerged from the Victoria and Albert Museum exhilarated, astonished, almost incredulous. An addict of exhibitions, I have suffered at Wembley, enjoyed myself at Barcelona, tried to be indulgent in Glasgow, been simultaneously appalled and delighted on three occasions in Paris. "Britain Can Make It" is, within the limits of its size, decidedly the best exhibition I have seen. High praise must go to the Council of Industrial Design and to the manufacturers who have risen to the Council's invitation. The exhibition is not just a Trade Fair; it is an attempt to set a standard of good design.

The general treatment of the Exhibition is excellent, thanks to Mr. James Gardner and Mr. Basil Spence. I do not mean that the style employed is a good style: no good style is now current. To the geometrical forms associated with contemporary architecture they have joined ornamentation in a different idiom. Such miscegenation will incur the rebukes of our æsthetic Roundheads, but for my part I must congratulate the designers on making the best of an impossible job. A similarly conceived church or town-hall would be deplorable, but in a temporary exhibition the effect is elegant, gay and spirited—altogether a change from the dowdiness, whether heavy-fisted or etiolated, that we have sadly come to consider characteristically British. My only grave complaint is that ventilation seems non-existent. Specially effective and imaginative are the sections devoted to Sports, Travel, Garden Tools and Toys. On the other hand, the large revolving affair in the fashion section looks as if it had escaped from a Hollywood "musical": not only is it clumsy in its effort to be rococo, but it stifles the clothes it is supposed to display.

A malicious visitor may complain that the showmanship is better than the things shown. But to our eyes, long starved of consumers' goods, the profusion of desirable exhibits seems positively bewildering. Covetousness at first stifles criticism. And when one recovers one's senses, it remains evident that the selection committees have most of them been rigorous. The weakest section is that devoted to silversmithing, jewellery and plate. Here is craftsmanship, but hardly a glimmer of invention or vitality. (Some enamel hair-brushes which have mysteriously scraped their way in are the worst objects in the whole show.) Clocks also are very poor; decorative furniture, some of it pretentious and inconvenient as well as ugly. Very few patterned carpets or rugs—our carpet manufacturers have long been notorious for their unreadiness to accept informed criticism. A lot of good pottery, but the factories do not seem yet to be producing many new designs. Though the glass shows a marked improvement, there is not much of it. A few strikingly good wallpapers (bravo, Mr. Bawden), but hardly any of the best designs shown at the wallpaper exhibition seem to have been taken up by manufacturers.

A series of furnished rooms has been arranged for various types, ranging from the agricultural labourer to the prosperous barrister. A room containing nothing that is not modern is almost bound to seem unreal—appropriate only to a monster who has read nothing but modern books. And the room designed for a "single woman, aged thirty-five, journalist, now in the Civil Service, widely travelled," is unlikely to satisfy her if she has used her eyes when travelling, for it is glum and lifeless. On the whole, however, these rooms are cheerful and their contents well chosen.

Men's clothes and shoes good; so are women's tailored clothes and shoes (more elaborate clothes very uneven, and the proportion of floor space given to women's clothes seems to me excessive). Outstanding in excellence are toys, domestic equipment, hand and garden tools, luggage. Books well chosen but too few. Furnishing and dress fabrics very numerous, and on the whole excellent. Note the cheap fabrics designed for the West African market: I hope only that these magnificent designs will soon be available to those of us who are not Negroes.

I have been at pains to point out what I take to be the weak points in the Exhibition, but the general impression, I must repeat, is incomparably better than anything one could have hoped. Already there is a wide range of well-designed goods; and many of the best (though the catalogue gives no prices) are not luxury goods. There was a danger that the public, being so sorely in need of goods, would accept anything available, however wretched in design and quality. (Look, for instance, at the lampshades now in the shop windows.) It is a blessing, therefore, that the first assembly of the things soon to be on sale should be of a standard unknown in the palmy days between the wars.

Does this exhibition, then, reveal a wonderful and necessary change of heart in our manufacturers? One fears not. The committees appointed by the Council of Industrial Design have selected the exhibits with exacting assiduity. Manufacturers sent in only the goods that they thought specially good, and a third of the material submitted was rejected. Fury is widespread among manufacturers, and I understand that in the Five Towns protest is already shrill. The Exhibition proves our ability to produce well-designed goods, but how general is the desire to do so? And the manufacturers not represented here—are they ready to take their medicine? Will they improve their goods to the standard of design here exemplified? The answer depends no doubt largely on the degree of success the Exhibition enjoys with foreign buyers. But the response of the British public, and particularly of our retailers, is equally important. Good design seldom costs more than bad design; most of the exhibits could be produced much more cheaply if there were enough demand for them. And if the demand for well-designed goods has seemed small, the bad taste of the retailers rather than of the public has been responsible.

I must address an entreaty to the authorities of the Co-operative Wholesale Society. No other body can do so much to improve or to debase public taste—and hitherto their influence has not been fortunate. If they would accept the standards and advice of the Council for Industrial Design, the benefit to the country would be inestimable. Some persons believe that Gresham's Law applies to taste, bad design automatically expelling good design; and the cynic may add about the exhibits at South Kensington: "They may be good enough for foreigners; they are certainly not bad enough for the English." The Co-operators could, I believe, confute such pessimism. And here is their opportunity. The Government, a Labour Government, has given the lead. Will they have the courage and open-mindedness to take it? RAYMOND MORTIMER

THE CHILD'S GARDEN OF ECONOMIC VERSE

Visitors to the toy section of "Britain Can Make It" will have to do a great deal of explaining to children.—*The Times*, September 24th.

The show is so full of a number of things
For good overseas girls and boys
That our children should all be as happy as kings
At the sight of exportable toys.
Though Britain can make it, it is not for sale
And good British children know why,
For toddlers are told the economist's tale
That Britain must export or die.

Our adverse trade balance our babies must face
While imports and exports are planned—
Wise children have learned that one doll in the case
Is worth more than two dolls in the hand.
Though Britain's shop-window with playthings is packed
Our infants do not find it strange
That the dazzling display is designed to attract
The maximum foreign exchange.

These products of British industrial design
Will give little Egyptians a thrill;
These playthings of plastic we gladly consign
To the tots of Peru and Brazil.
No right-minded schoolboy in Britain complains
If we close up our huge export gaps
By selling our snappy, streamlined model trains
To dear little Argentine chaps.

Toy novelties fashioned by State enterprise
Are greeted with juvenile cheers,
But Britain's home nurseries must still patronise
Home markets of toy racketeers.
For richer and greater Great Britain will grow,
The more toys and dollies she ships;
And bright girls and boys, after seeing the show,
Should tune in to kind Uncle Cripps.

SAGITTARIUS

DEMOB. DIARY

[Tom Harrisson is now demobilised after two years in Borneo where he was the first officer to be dropped behind the Japanese lines. He became Military Commander and then, after the armistice, Administrative Officer of the whole Interior.]

FIRST impression: relief. Things are not so bad as they seemed from my first newspaper (the *Straits Times*), after nearly a year without seeing one. East, where most of the column space is naturally about Asiatic and local news, stuff from the West is so concentrated that only the appalling impinges. From afar, Europe seems not *nearly* in its death throes, but actually death rattling. This impression is so strong, that white men in the East have little wish to go home, even when things are pretty sticky in their own neighbourhood.

* * *

Flying back from the East in September '46 compared with flying out in May '44. The fine renaissance of red tape. Masterstroke: most of the passengers on our York were "other ranks," returning for urgent compassionate reasons. Apparently a new order has lately been issued that Movement Authority papers endorsed to this effect *must* be written in red ink. Chaps who had the necessary sentence in red ink were allowed to proceed straight home from the aerodrome, by whatever means seemed best to them and without formality. Those with the same words in black ink, had to go to London and through all the routines of reporting to a military H.Q. We ran out of red ink months ago in Borneo.

* * *

People's politeness. I had heard that everybody was cross and rude and tired. They certainly seem tired enough, but the courtesy of bus-conductors, shopkeepers, people one bumps into in pub or tube, is better than in wartime and as good as I remember in the calmest days of peace (1930). I suppose being in uniform helps; but it surely can't make all that difference. Perhaps those who have been here all the time do not realise how polite we are as compared with Madrasis or Philippinos?

The funny way civilians come up to you if you're in uniform—dim-looking men in bowler hats; dull, dead lawyer types; little baggy, uneasy, capped men—to tell you that they are not *just* civilians—they too were in the war, and when they were and where. You get surprises. The one you thought might have been a corporal was colonel, and vice versa. Behind it all a pathetic nostalgia for those days of comradeship, discomfort, and at least the *feel* of masculine adventure.

While people are (unexpectedly) polite, the only friendliness comes from these inferiority-complexed ex-service civilians. After Australia, Manila, a Sarawak long house, or the easy friendship of soldiers, it is horrid to stand solitary in a city pub, or face your fellows in the train speechless, almost ashamed. One longs to reach out and talk a little to the elderly gentleman with the checked waistcoat reading Kafka; to strike up an unambitious, inter-station intimacy with the nice, dumb-looking blonde—how else can we ever plumb dumbness? Each day that passes one's orientally acquired easiness and directness of manner shrink back a little farther into the unsatisfied apparatus of a civilised ego. It is so much more comfortable to live all around one, to push out and pull back the pseudopodia of contact and conflict, of interchanged argument and fun, wherever one goes, instead of living in the restricted circle of private western experience.

* * *

Of course, uranium, the U.S.S.R. and Ernie Bevin shadow every life and hope. In the same way as in Munich days, people are repressing the inevitably depressing. I have yet to hear a *single* spontaneous conversation about Nuremberg, Trieste or the Atom Bomb. The struggle to live is almost wholly domestic. The Squatters were a wonderful relief (whatever our opinion about them), something outside ourselves which was *dramatically* domestic.

* * *

The retreat from Ideology. Nearly everyone seems to be doing things *ad hoc* from Bevin downwards. Natural reaction from the horrid feel of the world, no doubt. One may as well live for oneself to-day. Ideals seem increasingly useless. Molecular content—that's the thing. The reaction is natural—but not very nice to come home to, after the so much easier, more erratic, less aware atmosphere of the East. It is better to live anywhere within three degrees of the Equator than within three hundred miles of Whitehall—or for that matter, live anywhere warm. It is difficult to be depressed for long when sunkissed.

There is no escapism any more. There is nowhere left to escape *to*. The only thing to escape *from* is the whole neutron-proton world—and before long, radar and rockets permitting, this will be the universe. Meanwhile, be warm and dry.

* * *

Some of the more unideological people are Labour M.P.s. One, I remember, telling me in 1942 that he was negotiating for a Conservative seat; I tried to prove to him that the Conservatives could not possibly win. Perhaps I sowed the germs of doubt in his mind. Anyway, he saw the pink light in time. Another I introduced to a political party which he wished to join because he thought it had a chance greatly to increase its power in the next General Election. A third, without politics, but with a healthy appreciation of opinion polls, studied the form book and ran into first place. A fourth has been true blue Tory ever since I knew him in youthful days.

Anyway, it is nice to see all these bright, intelligent fellows as Labour M.P.s. Better than the elderly trade unionists, who might have made the new House of Commons so dull. I am only sorry some of the younger and brighter ones seem so unhappy about it. Overwork? Yes! Anyway that is a way of compensating for a sense of frustration and guilt.

* * *

The first film I have seen for a long, long time. Newsreel of the closing speeches at Nuremberg. Something about Goering which almost brought tears. A man who sticks to his principles is a phenomenon to-day. We all *expect* those boys to rat. A feeling, that, somehow, after all, he'd won; that it is we who are now indecent, degrading not only the prisoners but humanity.

I had something to do with executions in this war. But in the heat of battle, when immediate safety was involved.

Does cold-blooded execution deter anyone? I think not. The next man always believes he can do better and pull it off, either by better luck or greater skill. If this were not so, football pools, horse-races, the Balkans and war would have faded out long ago. The affair seems a negation of all we have learned from recent historical, sociological, economic and psychological research. Do we reaffirm that the man alone makes history, that the individual invents the period? Should we not also prosecute defeat, despair, economic chaos, artificial geography, which the victorious powers have so successfully reaffirmed all round Nuremberg?

It comes to this: who is responsible for dropping the atom bomb on Hiroshima? How many, from pilots and generals to premiers and scientists, could have been tried for that if we had lost the war?

* * *

As if things were too cheerful, the Government posters, offering us three alternatives—venereal disease, diphtheria, or car-borne death. All-round decline in sense of humour. Seldom heard laughter—again such a violent contrast to the East. Feeling of stomachic dissatisfaction after a restaurant meal; makes you realise what a difference those rolls made on the side plate. The awful drink situation. (You should see Shepherds in Cairo.) On the way up from Swindon, a brother Easterner, chauffeur and I stopped for a drink. The round cost 15*s.* 6*d.* It was our introduction to England at peace.

* * *

How well off the intellectuals are. The fine standard of living of friends, who were, pre-war, penniless. For years, people insisted in "*New Writing*" (and in their cups), that the artist *must* have financial security before he could do his best work—that the economic position of the artist was the root of all his frustration. Now, free from the shadow of overdraft, some of them are making thousands where before they made tens. When, then, does the big creation begin?

It strikes me, reading quickly and superficially in the few days I've been home, that there is less *creative* work being done at the moment than at any time since I saw my first Matisse. Most of the novelists, for instance, have become journalists, critics, or political theorists; or alternatively, are dragging out the final lines of a long, tenuous thread leading back to their best pre-war novel and through the war ones to the next, which one can only hope will be their autobituary. However, I hear Orwell, accompanied by Mr. Paul (*A Handful of French Earth*) Potts, has found an atom-proof valley in the Hebrides. From here, as from Los Angeles six years ago, we expectantly await either the Great Novel or the Grand Yogi. Of the New Commissar there is still no adequate indication.

* * *

The disappointing failure of all the good intentions and high talk about developments in social science. Quantitative public opinion polling has increased to a certain extent, and rightly increased in prestige. But the other and deeper methods, efforts to explore the fundamental levels and motives of normal social behaviour, are much as they were.

Anyway, Mass-Observation, which was supposed to be dependent upon myself, has carried on and prospered. Incidentally, I'd be very glad if old friends of M-O or of myself would get in touch now I'm back. I am afraid I never received most of the letters which were sent on to me where I was.

TOM HARRISSON

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to X.Y.Z.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

To equalise cats' status with dogs, Miss E. Carr Wallington, Surrey, is petitioning for the issue of cat licences.—*Sunday Express.*

The failure of the Vale of Leven Gas Company to get ahead with the street lighting scheme was discussed. Treasurer Rose has been and is most energetic to see that Inveraray is not left in the dark this coming winter, particularly with so many Polish soldiers stationed in the place.—*Oban Times.*

Some Salford men were "sailing" along a side street on a raft which they had made last night, when they met a man wading neck-deep in the floods and pushing a submerged bicycle. He came aboard at their invitation but refused to leave his cycle behind, and in his efforts to salve it the raft capsized.—*Manchester Guardian.*

Directors of Torquay United F.C. are to buy houses to attract new talent to the team.—*News Chronicle.*

This milk has not been diverted (now permanently, we note) to the working classes because they need it, but to starve the better classes, to whom it has always been a great item of food, thus the evil common man hopes to rid the country of the better classes in time.—Letter in *Picture Post.*

JAPAN UNDER CONTROL

VERY little has been published in this country about Japan under American rule. But it is now possible, with the aid of S.C.A.P.* and reports in the United States and here from officers recently in Tokio, to get some general picture of the implications of American government in Japan.

Immediately after the occupation the situation did not look hopeful. Industry and education were at a standstill. The great matchwood cities were in ruins, and the people were hungry. It was reported that in Tokio, its population shrunk from almost seven million to under three, 900,000 people on one Sunday in September went into the country to buy black market vegetables. The whole nation was stunned by the impact of the atom bomb, but still more by the sudden shattering of all the grandiose promises of victory and world conquest. "Add to this the fact that the real leaders are afraid to speak out, not knowing how long United States troops will be here to protect them against the dreaded secret police, and it will be readily seen why as yet there has been no significant political developments in Japan." (*S.C.A.P., October*, 1945).

Then, on October 4th, MacArthur made what seemed at first, like all his overt steps, a move in the direction of democracy. He issued a directive that has been called Japan's Bill of Rights, permitting free discussion of the Emperor system, removing all restrictions on political, civil and religious liberties, releasing all political prisoners and nominally abolishing the secret police.

The effect was electrical. Thousands of Korean and Chinese slave miners downed tools and prepared for repatriation. Socialist and Communist leaders came out of gaol, and when the Trade Union Bill was passed in December, trade unions sprang up like mushrooms. In January they were being formed at the rate of two a day; and by the end of May, Central News reported 10,000 unions with a membership of three million. Only eight of these, however, were national unions. The unions were of every political colour, and to some extent the pre-war rivalry between Social-Democrat and Communist unions was revived.

The new unions quickly demanded increases in wages, shorter hours, a share in management, and the dismissal of "war-guilty" officials. S.C.A.P. estimated that only 14 per cent. of workers earned enough to meet the increasing cost of living, and in some cases unions were strong enough to negotiate wage increases of 300 per cent. In others they originated a new type of strike which went one stage further than the famous French sit-down strikes of 1938; for the Japanese workers not only took possession of the plant but also carried on production without the management. The reason for this was partly that S.C.A.P. forbade strikes in essential industries, and partly that workers realised that with the tremendous shortage of goods, production had to go on.

In the first of these strikes, in the newspaper *Yomiuri-Hochi*, the workers alone continued to issue the paper until their demands were granted. In a strike in a small electric tramway in Tokio, the union collected fares, paid workers' wages, then banked the balance for the company. In some cases, for instance, in the Mitsui coal strike in Hokkaido, during the period of "self-control," output increased. Almost all the strikes were successful to some degree.

Second only to this fever of unionisation was the political awakening of Japanese women. The civil and social inequality of women of all classes in Japan was so flagrant that the feminist movement cut across divisions of class or party. Now that political restrictions seemed to have been removed, women became vocal and demanded a revision of the civil code under which they are mere chattels.

Through radio, press and cinema, S.C.A.P. encouraged women to use their new vote; and, at the General Election, 67.1 per cent. of women registered voted. The high percentage of the women candidates who were elected to the Diet was amazing. Of a total of 2,781 candidates for the 466 seats in the Diet, only 82 were women; but 39 of these were elected. Most prominent was Mrs. Shizue Kato, one of the founders of the birth-control movement in Japan.

Women also began to fight for better industrial conditions and, after successful negotiations, women workers in the Nihon Woollen Mills for the first time in Japanese history were granted four days menstrual leave and seventy days leave for childbirth. The repeal of all wartime exceptions to the labour code will affect ultimately 43,000 women and 20,000 children working in mines; and, by April 1st, all women and children underground night workers were discharged.

Other developments were the appointment of policewomen and a decree abolishing licensed prostitution. It is debatable how effective such a decree can be, but it may do away with some of the worst abuses of the Japanese system.

When we come to politics it is more difficult to assess progress. During the war all political parties were dissolved, but after the surrender Diet members regrouped themselves in four main parties, Shimpoto or Progressives, Jiyuto or Liberals, Kyodoto or Co-operators, and Social-Democrats. It is easier to say what these parties are not than what they are. The Progressives are not progressive, the Liberals not liberal, and the Co-operators have no connection with industrial or consumers' co-operatives. These parties resemble nothing so much as a coiled mass of snakes who, having sloughed their skins, continue their reptilian movements in spite of occasional proddings by MacArthur's big stick.

One such prodding was the purge of January 2nd, known as "MacArthur's typhoon," a directive which dissolved 120 Right-wing organisations and disqualified active supporters of the war from public office. The Progressives lost 200 of their 274 Diet members, the Co-operative leadership was completely wiped out, while the Liberals and the Right Wing of the Social-Democrats also suffered severely. Later events suggest that MacArthur did not realise at the time that logically the purge should have embraced many of his "reliable" Japanese.

The results of the General Election, held on April 10th, were: Liberals 140 (previous Diet 46), Progressives 93 (274), Social-Democrats 92 (17), Co-operators 14 (28), Communists 5 (0), Minor Parties 38, Independents 82. While MacArthur warmly congratulated the electorate on taking a wise middle course, other writers have asserted that the new Diet is just as reactionary as previous ones. My own opinion is that replacement of the Progressives by the slightly less reactionary Liberals and the big gain of Left Wing parties represented the beginning of a swing to the Left.

After the General Election, the Shidehara Government reluctantly resigned. Ichiro Hatoyama, the leader of the Liberal Party and as fine a Fascist wolf as ever wore democrat's clothing, expected to be the new Premier but was purged by S.C.A.P. at the last moment. Tetsu Katayama, the secretary of the Social-Democrats, was then asked to form a Government, but owing chiefly to the big schism between the Right, Centre and Left Wings of his party, he was unable to do so. Finally, the Liberal, Shigeru Yoshida, Foreign Minister in the Shidehara Cabinet and former Ambassador to the United Kingdom, formed a Liberal-Progressive Cabinet which was given a very luke-warm reception by the press. S.C.A.P., however, said that it marked a further step forward in democratic progress, and that to set-off its conservative bias there was a vigorous Opposition with the difficult biological function of acting "as a watchdog of the liberal groups of the populace and as a gad-fly to the parties in power." Present indications are that it will be a stop-gap Cabinet, as the Social-Democrats are gaining more and more press and public support.

The Communists have had more influence than their five seats in the Diet would suggest. In February S.C.A.P. reported, "They speak out and get a hearing on all controversial issues. . . Press reactions show that they are accorded more newspaper space than all other political parties combined." Being the only party free from war guilt, they readily assisted MacArthur in his purge. They are the only party openly opposed to the Emperor-system. Their agrarian policy is a radical one, but, believing Japan is not ready for Socialism, they have put forward a moderate political programme, aiming—so far without success—at a united front with the Social-Democrats.

MAX BICKERTON

[To be concluded.)

* S.C.A.P. are the Monthly Summations of non-military activities in Japan issued by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers.

ILLEGAL OPERATION

SPECIALISTS in gynæcology not infrequently die rich. In the majority of cases their wealth represents earnings from attendance on childbirth; their specialist knowledge enables them to charge high fees. Occasionally the earnings have been derived from a practice generally known in English Criminal Courts as "the illegal operation," but by other names or by no name at all when performed by competent surgeons in expensive nursing homes. In its bearing on this lucrative source whence some medical specialists can derive large incomes, the law is obscure and ambiguous in wording. The relevant Statute is a Consolidating Act relating to Offences against the Person, 1861, Sections 58 and 59.

> 58. Every Woman, being with Child, who, with intent to procure her own Miscarriage, shall unlawfully administer to herself any Poison or other Noxious Thing, or Shall unlawfully use any Instrument or other Means whatsoever with the like Intent, and whosoever, with Intent to procure the Miscarriage of any Woman, whether she be or be not with Child, shall unlawfully administer to her or cause to be taken by her any Poison or other Noxious Thing, or shall unlawfully use any Instrument or other means whatsoever with the like Intent, shall be guilty of Felony, and being convicted thereof shall be liable, at the Discretion of the Court, to be kept in Penal Servitude for Life or for any Term not less than Three Years, or to be imprisoned for any Term not exceeding Two Years, with or without Hard Labour, and with or without Solitary Confinement.
>
> 59. Whosoever shall unlawfully supply or procure any Poison or other Noxious Thing, or any Instrument or Thing whatsoever, knowing that the same is intended to be unlawfully used or employed with Intent to procure the Miscarriage of any Woman, whether she be or be not with Child, shall be guilty of a Misdemeanour, and being convicted thereof shall be liable, at the Discretion of the Court, to be kept in Penal Servitude for the Term of Three Years, or to be imprisoned for any Term not exceeding Two Years, with or without Hard Labour.

When this Consolidating Act was passed all surgery was extremely dangerous to health and life, and no one seems to have thought, much less stated, that abortion could ever cease to be a crime, or develop into the safe, medical procedure it has since become. The words "Poison or any Noxious Thing" in the law as it still stands, indicate how far it is removed from accepted surgical practice of to-day, and show that at the time the law was originally framed, maybe centuries before 1861, poisoning and other highly injurious means were the only methods by which abortion could be induced. The word "unlawfully" implies that termination of pregnancy might be lawful in some cases, but the only time a Court of Law has ever actually decided that a skilled abortion was lawful was during a celebrated case (1938) which followed a surgical abortion on a girl, under the age of consent, who had been raped.

The rigorous wording of the law remains unchanged, yet it is well known that skilled abortion has for many years been performed by competent surgeons on healthy women able to pay large fees, so that there are now two entirely

different kinds of abortion. The skilled operations take place in the very early stages of pregnancy. This is the type of safe abortion which can in this country be obtained by enlightened women with long purses, by a very few amongst the less well-off, and not at all by the poor. It has no clear justification in a law which bears no relationship to modern medical practice.

The other kind of abortion, also secret, is unskilled and dangerous, is much more common than the skilled operation, and is perpetrated in all kinds of horrible circumstances. One cannot estimate the aggregate harmful effect on public health of this amateur bungling. Sometimes a courageous doctor refers in an annual report to the hospital results which accrue from the more dangerous of these unskilled attempts. One Medical Officer of Health reported that in many institutions the proportion of abortion patients at times accounted for one-half or more of those occupying beds in women's surgical wards. Another wrote that at an inquest in his city on a mother of six children, it was stated that during the previous three years 31 women had died through trying themselves or being "helped" by some unskilled person, to bring an end to the possibility of an addition to the family. The Government Report on Maternal Mortality (1937) revealed that one-sixth of all maternal mortality is due to these amateur attempts, and the real situation is much more grave; for many deaths certified as being from other causes are actually the end results of such interference, followed by years of ill-health.

A recent question in the House of Commons by John Freeman, M.P., elicited the information that in late years Criminal Court convictions have increased fourfold, a condition which induces some people to suggest heavier sentences. But through stricter punishment more women would be thrown on their own resources, and each conviction would tend to make abortion still more profitable for those not afraid to take risks. With the law as it is, every woman who thus experiments on herself should be in the dock and every woman who has been "helped" should be tried with the helper. That this is never done is a further proof of the confused interpretation of the Statute. Abortion law is now a tragic absurdity, and it is no exaggeration to say that here is the supreme example of "one law for the rich and another for the poor."

There are now signs of a slight increase of public concern about the state of the law. Some months ago when a much-esteemed Lancashire doctor, who at their urgent request had given skilled help to some patients, was tried for the offence, a petition signed by 11,000 women was presented asking for leniency. And very recently, when an unskilled woman was similarly accused, a petition organised in her favour was signed by local people, including the vicar of her parish. Before the war, the Women's Co-operative Guild and the National Council for Equal Citizenship passed strong resolutions urging legal reform. In 1936 the British Medical Association published a report on its inquiry into the medical aspects of abortion and—rather surprisingly—declared support for reform in these words: "Whilst the B.M.A. has no doubt that the legalisation of abortion for social and economic reasons would go far to solve the problem of the secret operation, it realises that this is a matter for consideration by the community as a whole."

A small committee supported by a number of legal and medical men and women is now engaged in trying to arouse support for its firm belief that it is urgently necessary to amend the law quoted at the beginning of this article so as to establish that it will henceforth not be criminal for a qualified medical practitioner to terminate the pregnancy of a woman with her consent when this procedure appears to be medically or socially desirable either in her own interest or in that of the community. This reform can be attained when enough people join in demanding it.

ALICE JENKINS

MR. HENRY WALLACE'S LETTER
To President Truman

The verbatim text of the letter addressed by the late Secretary of Commerce to the President of the United States has not been published in this country. Editorial comment is made on an earlier page. The cross-headings have been inserted by this journal.

My Dear Mr. President: JULY 23, 1946

I hope you will excuse this long letter. Personally I hate to write long letters, and I hate to receive them.

My only excuse is that this subject is a very important one—probably the most important in the world today. I checked with you about this last Thursday and you suggested after the cabinet meeting on Friday that you would like to have my views.

I have been increasingly disturbed about the trend of international affairs since the end of the war, and I am even more troubled by the apparently growing feeling among the American people that another war is coming and the only way that we can head it off is to arm ourselves to the teeth. Yet all of past history indicates that an armaments race does not lead to peace but to war. The months just ahead may well be the crucial period which will decide whether the civilized world will go down in destruction after the five or ten years needed for several nations to arm themselves with atomic bombs. Therefore I want to give you my views on how the present trend toward conflict might be averted.

You may think it strange, in reading further, that I should express so much concern at this particular time, just after the foreign ministers' conference at which real progress was made on peace treaties for several Eastern European countries and for Italy.

Others have expressed a feeling of increased optimism that still further progress could be made through continued negotiations on the same basis, even though the remaining European issues are much more difficult than those on which a measure of agreement has already been reached.

I am fully appreciative of the efforts that have been made and the patience that has been exercised by our various representatives who have carried on negotiations with the Russians during the last few years.

I am conscious of the aggravations they have put up with and of the apparent inconsistencies on the part of Russian representatives.

On the other hand, I feel these very difficulties make it necessary for some of us who, from the outside, are watching the course of events to voice our opinions.

THE BURDEN OF ARMAMENTS

Incidentally, as Secretary of Commerce I talk to a good many businessmen, and I find them very much concerned over the size of the Federal budget and the burden of the National debt. For the next fiscal year and for the year immediately ahead by far the largest category of Federal spending is the national defense.

For example, the total recommended Federal appropriations for the fiscal year 1947 submitted to the Congress in the official budget amounted to about $36 billion. Of the total budget some $13 billion was for the War and Navy Departments alone. An additional $5 billion was for war liquidation activities. Ten billion represented interest on the public debt and veterans' benefits, which are primarily the continuing costs of past wars. These items total $28 billion, or about 80 per cent. of the total recommended expenditures.

Clearly, a large reduction in the Federal budget would require a cut in military appropriations. These appropriations are now more than ten times as great as they were during the thirties. In the 1938 budget, appropriations for national defense were less than a billion dollars, compared with $13 billion for the present fiscal year. Thus, even from a purely dollars and cents standpoint, American business and the American people have an interest in organizing a peaceful world in which the completely unproductive expenditures on national defense could be reduced.

Of course, dollars and cents are not the most important reason why we all want a peaceful world. The fundamental reason is that we do not wish to go through another war—and especially an atomic war which will undoubtedly be directed primarily against civilian populations and may well mean the end of modern civilization.

Yet, are we really concentrating all our efforts on a program to build a lasting peace?

There can be no doubt that the American people want and expect that their leaders will work for an enduring peace. But the people must necessarily leave to their leaders the specific ways and means to this objective. I think that at the moment the people feel that the outlook for the elimination of war is dark, that other nations are wilfully obstructing American efforts to achieve a permanent peace.

AMERICA IN FOREIGN EYES

How do American actions since V-J Day appear to other nations?

I mean by actions the concrete things like $13 billion for the War and Navy Departments, the Bikini tests of the atomic bomb and continued production of bombs, the plan to arm Latin America with our weapons, production of B-29's and planned production of B-36's, and the effort to secure air bases spread over half the globe from which the other half of the globe can be bombed. I cannot but feel that these actions must make it look to the rest of the world as if we were only paying lip service to peace at the conference table.

These acts rather make it appear either (1) that we are preparing ourselves to win the war which we regard as inevitable or (2) that we are trying to build up a predominance of force to intimidate the rest of mankind.

How would it look to us if Russia had the atomic bomb and we did not, if Russia had 10,000-mile bombers and air bases within a thousand miles of our coast lines and we did not?

Some of the military men and self-styled "realists" are saying:

"What's wrong with trying to build up a predominance of force? The only way to preserve peace is for this country to be so well armed that no one will dare attack us. We know that America will never start a war."

The flaw in this policy is simply that it will not work. In a world of atomic bombs and other revolutionary new weapons, such as radioactive poison gases and biological warfare, a peace maintained by a predominance of forces is no longer possible.

PEACE CANNOT BE DICTATED

Why is this so? The reasons are clear:

First: Atomic warfare is cheap and easy compared with old fashioned war. Within a very few years several countries can have atomic bombs and other atomic weapons. Compared with the cost of large armies and the manufacture of old fashioned weapons, atomic bombs cost very little and require only a relatively small part of a nation's production plant and labor force.

Second: So far as winning a war is concerned, having more bombs—even many more bombs—than the other fellow is no longer a decisive advantage. If another nation had enough bombs to eliminate all of our principal cities and our heavy industry, it wouldn't help us very much if we had 10 times as many bombs as we needed to do the same to them.

Third, and most important, the very fact that several nations have atomic bombs will inevitably result in a neurotic, fear-ridden, itching-trigger psychology in all peoples of the world, and because of our wealth and vulnerability we would be among the most seriously affected. Atomic war will not require vast and time-consuming preparations, the mobilization of large armies, the conversion of a large proportion of a country's industrial plants to the manufacture of weapons. In a world armed with

atomic weapons, some incident will lead to the use of those weapons.

There is a school of military thinking which recognizes these facts, recognizes that when several nations have atomic bombs, a war which will destroy modern civilization will result and that no nation or combination of nations can win such a war. This school of thought therefore advocates a "preventive war," an attack on Russia now before Russia has atomic bombs. This scheme is not only immoral but stupid. If we should attempt to destroy all the principal Russian cities and her heavy industry, we might well succeed. But the immediate counter-measure which such an attack would call for is the prompt occupation of all continental Europe by the Red Army. Would we be prepared to destroy the cities of all Europe in trying to finish what we started? This idea is so contrary to all the basic instincts and principles of the American people that any such action would be possible only under a dictatorship at home.

Thus the "predominance of force" idea, and the notion of a "defensive attack" are both unworkable. The only solution is the one which you have so wisely advanced and which forms the basis of the Moscow statement on atomic energy. That solution consists of mutual trust and confidence among nations, atomic disarmament, and an effective system of enforcing that disarmament.

Atom Monopoly

There is, however, a fatal defect in the Moscow statement, in the Acheson report, and in the American plan recently presented to the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission. That defect is the scheme, as it is generally understood, of arriving at international agreements by "easy stages," of requiring other nations to enter into binding commitments not to conduct research into the military uses of atomic energy and to disclose their uranium and thorium resources while the United States retains the right to withhold its technical knowledge of atomic energy until the international control and inspection system is working to our satisfaction.

In other words, we are telling the Russians that if they are "good boys" we may eventually turn over our knowledge of atomic energy to them and to the other nations. But there is no objective standard of what will qualify them as being "good" nor any specified time for sharing our knowledge. Is it any wonder that the Russians did not show any great enthusiasm for our plan? Would we have been enthusiastic if the Russians had a monopoly of atomic energy, and offered to share the information with us at some indefinite time in the future at their discretion if we agreed now not to try to make a bomb and give them information on our secret resources of uranium and thorium? I think we would react as the Russians appear to have done. We would have put up counter-proposals for the record, but our real effort would go into trying to make a bomb so that our bargaining position would be equalized. That is the essence of the Russian position, which is very clearly stated in the *Pravda* article of June 24, 1946.

It is perfectly clear that the "step-by-step" plan in any such one-sided form is not workable. The entire agreement will have to be worked out and wrapped up in a single package. This may involve certain steps or stages, but the timing of such steps must be agreed to in the initial master treaty.

Russia's Reactions

Realistically, Russia has two cards which she can use in negotiating with us:

(1) Our lack of information on the state of her scientific and technical progress on atomic energy;

(2) Our ignorance of her uranium and thorium resources.

These cards are nothing like as powerful as our cards—a stockpile of bombs, manufacturing plants in actual production, B-29's and B-36's, and our bases covering half the globe. Yet we are in effect asking her to reveal her only two cards immediately—telling her that after we have seen her cards we will decide whether we want to continue to play the game. Insistence on our part that the game must be played our way will only lead to a deadlock. The Russians will redouble their efforts to manufacture bombs, and they may also decide to expand their "security zone" in a serious way. Up to now, despite all our outcries against it, their efforts to develop a security zone in Eastern Europe and in the Middle East are small change from the point of view of military power as compared with our air bases in Greenland, Okinawa and many other places thousands of miles from our shores.

Rival Control Plans

We may feel very self-righteous if we refuse to budge on our plan and the Russians refuse to accept it, but that means only one thing—the atomic armament race is on in deadly earnest.

I am convinced, therefore, that if we are to achieve our hopes of negotiating a treaty which will result in effective international atomic disarmament, we must abandon the impractical form of the "step-by-step" idea which was presented to the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission. We must be prepared to reach an agreement which will commit us to disclosing information and destroying our bombs at a specified time or in terms of specified actions by other countries, rather than at our unfettered discretion. If we are willing to negotiate on this basis, I believe the Russians will also negotiate seriously with a view to reaching an agreement. There can be, of course, no absolute assurance the Russians will finally agree to a workable plan if we adopt this view. They may prefer to stall until they also have bombs and can negotiate on a more equal basis, not realizing the danger to themselves as well as the rest of the world in a situation in which several nations have atomic bombs.

But we must make the effort to head off the atomic bomb race. We have everything to gain by doing so, and do not give up anything by adopting this policy as the fundamental basis for our negotiation. During the transition period toward full-scale international control we retain our technical know-how, and the only existing production plants for fissionable materials and bombs remain within our borders. The Russian counter-proposal itself is an indication that they may be willing to negotiate seriously if we are. In some respects their counter-proposal goes even farther than our plan and is in agreement with the basic principles of our plan, which is to make violations of the proposed treaty a national and international crime for which individuals can be punished.

The Question of the Veto

It will have been noted that in the preceding discussion I have not mentioned the question of the so-called "veto." I have not done so because the veto issue is completely irrelevant, because the proposal to "abolish the veto," which means something in the general activities of the Security Council, has no meaning with respect to a treaty on atomic energy. If we sign a treaty with other nations, we will all have agreed to do certain things. Until we arrive at such a treaty, we as well as the other major powers will have the power of veto. Once the treaty is ratified, however, the question of the veto becomes meaningless. If any nation violates the treaty provision, of permitting inspection of suspected illegal bomb-making activities, what action is there that can be vetoed? As in the case of any other treaty violation, the remaining signatory nations are free to take what action they feel is necessary, including the ultimate step of declaring war.

I believe that for the United States and Russia to live together in peace is the most important single problem facing the world today. Many people, in view of the relatively satisfactory outcome of the recent Paris Conference, feel that good progress is being made on the problem of working out relations between the Anglo-Saxon powers and Russia. This feeling seems to me to be resting on superficial appearances more productive of a temporary truce than of final peace.

On the whole, as we look beneath the surface in late July of 1946, our actions and those of the Western Powers in general carry with them the ultimate danger of a third world war—this time an atomic world war. As the strongest single nation, and the nation whose leadership is followed by the entire world with the exception of Russia and a few weak neighboring countries in Eastern Europe, I believe that we have the opportunity to lead the world to peace.

In general, there are two over-all points of view which can be taken in approaching the problem of United States-Russian relations.

The first is that it is not possible to get along with the Russians, and therefore war is inevitable.

The second is that war with Russia would bring catastrophe to all mankind, and therefore we must find a way of living in peace.

It is clear that our own welfare as well as that of the entire world requires that we maintain the latter point of view. I am sure that this is also your opinion, and the radio address of the Secretary of State on July 15 clearly indicates that he is prepared to negotiate as long as may be necessary to work out a solution on this basis. We should try to get an honest answer to the question of what the factors are which cause Russia to distrust us, in addition to the question of what factors lead us to distrust Russia. I am not sure that we have as a nation or an administration found an adequate answer to either question, although we have recognized that both questions are of critical importance.

Why America Distrusts Russia

Our basic distrust of the Russians, which has been greatly intensified in recent months by the playing up of conflict in the press, stems from differences in political and economic organization. For the first time in our history defeatists among us have raised the fear of another system as a successful rival to democracy and free enterprise in other countries and perhaps even our own. I am convinced that we can meet that challenge as we have in the past by demonstrating that economic abundance can be achieved without sacrificing personal, political and religious liberties. We cannot meet it as Hitler tried to by an anti-Comintern alliance. It is perhaps too easy to forget that despite the deep-seated differences in our cultures and intensive anti-Russian propaganda of some twenty-five years standing, the American people reversed their attitudes during the crisis of war. Today, under the pressure of seemingly insoluble international problems and continuing deadlocks, the tide of American public opinion is again turning against Russia. In this reaction lies one of the dangers to which this letter is addressed.

I should list the factors which make for Russian distrust of the United States and of the Western World as follows:

The first is Russian history, which we must take into account because it is the setting in which Russians see all actions and policies of the rest of the world. Russian history for over a thousand years has been a succession of attempts, often unsuccessful, to resist invasion and conquest—by the Mongols, the Turks, the Swedes, the Germans and the Poles.

How Russia Views the West

The scant thirty years of the existence of the Soviet Government has in Russian eyes been a continuation of their historical struggle for national existence. The first four years of the new regime, from 1917 through 1921, were spent in resisting attempts at destruction by the Japanese, British and French, with some American assistance, and by the several White Russian armies encouraged and financed by the Western powers. Then, in 1941, the Soviet State was almost conquered by the Germans after a period during which the Western European powers had apparently acquiesced in the rearming of Germany in the belief that the Nazis would seek to expand eastward rather than westward. The Russians, therefore, obviously see themselves as fighting for their existence in a hostile world.

Second, it follows that to the Russians all of the defense and security measures of the Western powers seem to have an aggressive intent. Our actions to expand our military security system—such steps as extending the Monroe Doctrine to include the arming of the western hemisphere nations, our present monopoly of the atomic bomb, our interest in outlying bases and our general support of the British Empire—

appear to them as going far beyond the requirements of defense.

I think we might feel the same if the United States were the only capitalistic country in the world, and the principal socialistic countries were creating a level of armed strength far exceeding anything in their previous history.

From the Russian point of view, also, the granting of a loan to Britain and the lack of tangible results on their request to borrow for rehabilitation purposes may be regarded as another evidence of strengthening of an anti-Soviet bloc.

Unfriendly Encirclement

Finally, our resistance to her attempts to obtain warm water ports and her own security system in the form of "friendly" neighboring states seems, from the Russian point of view, to clinch the case. After twenty-five years of isolation and having achieved the status of a major power, Russia believes that she is entitled to recognition of her new status. Our interest in establishing democracy in Eastern Europe, where democracy by and large has never existed, seems to her an attempt to reestablish the encirclement of unfriendly neighbors which was created after the last war and which might serve as a springboard of still another effort to destroy her.

If this analysis is correct—and there is ample evidence to support it—the action to improve the situation is clearly indicated. The fundamental objective of such action should be to allay any reasonable Russian grounds for fear, suspicion and distrust. We must recognize that the world has changed and that today there can be no "One World" unless the United States and Russia can find some way of living together. For example, most of us are firmly convinced of the soundness of our position when we suggest the internationalization and defortification of the Danube or of the Dardanelles, but we would be horrified and angered by any Russian counter-proposal that would involve also the internationalizing and disarming of Suez or Panama. We must recognize that to the Russians these seem to be identical situations.

We should ascertain from a fresh point of view what Russia believes to be essential to her own security as a prerequisite to the writing of the peace and to co-operation in the construction of a world order. We should be prepared to judge her requirements against the background of what we ourselves and the British have insisted upon as essential to our respective security. The progress made during June and July on the Italian and other treaties indicates that we can hope to arrive at understanding and agreement on this aspect of the problem.

Two Systems Can Exist

We should not pursue further the question of the veto in connection with atomic energy, a question which is irrelevant and should never have been raised. We should be prepared to negotiate a treaty which will establish a definite sequence of events for the establishment of international control and development of atomic energy. This, I believe, is the most important single question, and the one on which the present trend is definitely toward deadlock rather than ultimate agreement.

We should make an effort to counteract the irrational fear of Russia which is being systematically built up in the American people by certain individuals and publications. The slogan that Communism and capitalism, regimentation and democracy, cannot continue to exist in the same world is, from a historical point of view, pure propaganda. Several religious doctrines, all claiming to be the only true gospel and salvation, have existed side by side with a reasonable degree of tolerance for centuries. This country was for the first half of its national life a democratic island in a world dominated by absolutist governments.

We should not act as if we too felt that we were threatened in today's world. We are by far the most powerful nation in the world, the only Allied Nation which came out of the war without devastation and much stronger than before the war. Any talk on our part about the need for strengthening our defenses further is bound to appear hypocritical to other nations.

We should also be prepared to enter into economic discussion without demanding that the Russians agree *in advance* to discussion of a series of what are to them difficult and somewhat unrelated political and economic concessions. Although this is the field in which my Department is most directly concerned, I must say that in my opinion this aspect of the problem is not as critical as some of the others, and certainly is far less important than the question of atomic energy control. But successful negotiations in this field might help considerably to bridge the chasm that separates us.

The question of a loan should be approached on economic and commercial grounds and should be disassociated as much as possible from the current misunderstandings which flow from the basic differences between their system and ours. You have already clearly disassociated yourself and the American people from the expressions of anti-Soviet support for the British loan. If we could have followed up your statement on signing the British Loan Bill with a loan to the USSR on a commercial basis and on similar financial terms, I believe that it would have clearly demonstrated that this country is not attempting to use its economic resources in the game of power politics. In the light of the present Export-Import Bank situation, it is now of the greatest importance that we undertake general economic discussions at an early date.

Mutual Trade

It is of the greatest importance that we should discuss with the Russians in a friendly way their long-range economic problems and the future of our co-operation in matters of trade. The reconstruction program of the USSR and the plans for the full development of the Soviet Union offer tremendous opportunities for American goods and American technicians. American products, especially machines of all kinds, are well established in the Soviet Union. For example, American equipment, practices and methods are standard in coal mining, iron and steel, oil, and non-ferrous metals.

Nor would this trade be one-sided. Although the Soviet Union has been an excellent credit risk in the past, eventually the goods and services exported from this country must be paid for by the Russians by exports to us and to other countries. Russian products which are either definitely needed or which are non-competitive in this country are various non-ferrous metal ores, furs, linen products, lumber products, vegetable drugs, paper and pulp, and native handicrafts.

I feel that negotiations on the establishment of active trade might well help to clear away the fog of political misunderstanding. Such discussions might well be initiated while we are endeavoring to reach a common ground on security issues, and if conducted in an understanding manner, could only serve to make that problem easier.

In the memorandum which I sent to you in March and which I suggested should be given to General Walter Bedell Smith (U.S. ambassador) to take to Moscow, I made certain suggestion for trade discussions in this country, I want to renew my original proposal and urge the appointment of a mission to Moscow. Such a mission might have as its objective the drafting of a proposal involving Russian reconstruction and collaboration with Russia in the industrial and economic development of areas in which we have joint interests, such as the Middle East. As I stated at that time, I am prepared to make suggestions for the composition of the mission and some of the specific economic questions to be discussed.

Invitation to Stalin

The Dept. of Commerce has already arranged, with the co-operation of the State Dept., to send two representatives to Moscow for the months of July and August for preliminary discussions of a much more limited scope. I think it is very significant that most of the more optimistic reports about the possibilities of getting along with the Russians have come from American observers who were businessmen. I have in mind such men as Wendell Willkie, Eric Johnston and former Ambassador Joe Davies. The Russians seem to be friendly to, and seem to have respect for, capitalist businessmen.

A number of observers have reported that the Soviet leaders are "isolationists" and appear to be lacking a true insight into the principles, motives, and ways of thinking in other nations. We must admit, however, that they pointed out the symptoms and the way to prevent World War II in their promotion of the concept of collective security. And aside from that, it seems to me we should try to do something constructive about their isolationism and ignorance, and I believe the aforementioned trade mission could accomplish much in that direction. I gather, too, that is part of what you have had in mind in inviting Premier Stalin to visit America.

Practical Collaboration

Many of the problems relating to the countries bordering on Russia could more readily be solved once an atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence is established and some form of economic arrangements are worked out with Russia. These problems also might be helped by discussions of an economic nature. Russian economic penetration of the Danube area, for example, might be countered by concrete proposals for economic collaboration in the development of the resources of this area, rather than by insisting that the Russians should cease their unilateral penetration and offering no solution to the present economic chaos there.

This proposal admittedly calls for a shift in some of our thinking about international matters. It is imperative that we make this shift. We have little time to lose. Our post-war actions have not yet been adjusted to the lessons to be gained from experience of Allied co-operation during the war and the facts of the atomic age.

It is certainly desirable that, as far as possible, we achieve unity on the home front with respect to our international relations; but unity on the basis of building up conflict abroad would prove to be not only unsound but disastrous. I think there is some reason to fear that in our earnest efforts to achieve bi-partisan unity in this country we may have given way too much to isolationism masquerading as tough realism in international affairs.

The real test lies in the achievement of international unity. It will be fruitless to continue to seek solutions for the many specific problems that face us in the making of the peace and in the establishment of an enduring international order without first achieving an atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence. The task admittedly is not an easy one. There is no question, as the Secretary of State has indicated, that negotiations with the Russians are difficult because of cultural differences, their traditional isolationism, and their insistence on a visible *quid pro quo* in all agreements.

Real Security

But the task is not an insuperable one if we take into account that to other nations our foreign policy consists not only of the principles that we advocate but of the actions we take. Fundamentally, this comes down to the point discussed earlier in this letter, that even our own security in the sense that we have known it in the past, cannot be preserved by military means in a world armed with atomic weapons. The only type of security which can be maintained by our own military force is the type described by a military man before the Senate atomic energy committee—a security against invasion after all our cities and perhaps 40 million of our city population have been destroyed by atomic weapons. That is the best that "security" on the basis of armaments has to offer us. It is not the kind of security that our people and the people of the other United Nations are striving for.

I think that progressive leadership along the lines suggested above would represent and best serve the interests of the large majority of our people, would reassert the forward looking position of the Democratic Party in international affairs, and, finally, would arrest the new trend towards isolationism and a disastrous atomic world war.

Respectfully,

H. A. Wallace

SIREN LAND

(By a Correspondent)

Capri to the uninitiated before the war was a millionaire's playground where "skies were blue" and "I loved you." For the initiated few who went there, to some it was indeed a realisation of this sugary dream, a white stage with a blue background, where the vulgar Fascist hierarchy held court for their sycophantic foreign friends. To others who went, expecting to find the rustic charm of Munthe's San Michele or the Capri that was Norman Douglas's first love, it was a bitter disappointment. True, the scenic beauty of the island, the flowers, the sheer rocks and the blueness of the sea were indescribably beautiful; but the garish parties of Virginio Gayda and Edda Ciano had uprooted the old tranquil life, turned the fishermen into boatmen for the Blue Grotto and their children into tourists' touts.

During the war Capri mercifully suffered social decline, as the snobs' gay parties withdrew to the greater safety of Rome. The island's strategic importance was no more (how many people know that its capture by the French from the British in 1809 is inscribed on the Arc de Triomphe?). The Germans used it as a rest centre for wounded soldiers, particularly those who had suffered from frost-bite on the Russian front. Be it to their credit or the benign influence of nature on the Germanic soul, the Wehrmacht's only atrocity on the island was the signing of many Teuton names on the white walls of the little chapel next to Tiberius's palace.

Only for one brief moment, when the Allies landed at Salerno in September, 1943, was Capri endangered as the scene of hostilities. The German command in Naples ordered their small garrison to withdraw from the island and then countermanded the order, happily too late, half an hour after their last troops had left. Meanwhile, a British naval craft had dashed across the bay and rescued Benedetto Croce and the present mayor, Dr. Brindisi, from any possible harm.

Naples was soon taken, and the battle moved northwards; but Capri was not long to be left in peace. The American air force took over the island as a rest centre, leaving Ischia to the British, thereby wisely emulating a similar deal by the Emperor Augustus many centuries before. Not only were most of the hotels, pensions, bars and cinemas requisitioned, as was natural, but white-helmeted M.P.s at the little port of the Grande Marina saw to it that the entire island was "off limits" to any mortal, bar the U.S.A.A.F. and residents of the island.

The "rest centre" then proceeded to wake up the island with a bang. The joys of Coney Island were lavishly employed to assure a good time for all. Jazz bands belched forth their hottest rhythm to the morning air, jeeps whirled along the leafy lovers' walk at the Tragara and local maidens were swiftly graduated as hostesses, who could jitterbug to Swing. No feature of natural beauty, which was attainable by jeep or speed boat, was left unadmired. Hundreds gazed at the Blue Grotto and San Michele. Astonishing cultural advances were made by the backward Capresi: everyone learned English, pounds of gum were chewed and pounds of candy were sucked. Coca Cola was all the rage at the Piccola Marina, where Lenin had held discussions on the beach and Gorki had planned his open-air Russian school.

There were a few grumbles to be sure. The air crews found that cinemas were all too few and there was only one PX store. Still, the liquid sold as Capri wine was potent liquor and the hostesses were undeniably friendly. Yes, Sir, with modern improvements this little island could be pepped up to a 100 per cent. holiday resort in natural technicolor. Water ski-ing and moonlight strolls vied for popularity, and it was freely whispered that the G.I. Bill of Rights would make Capri the 49th state of the Union. But then in those halycon days officers and G.I.s lived in a dream of perfect bliss; the plan to bring their wives to Europe had as yet cast no shadow on their dream.

Then came the generals. Two, three and four star generals came to see this wonder land, and even a commander-in-chief came for a short stay. Finally, the Siren Land called to Winston Churchill, who lunched one afternoon at Luigi's restaurant at the foot of the Faraglioni. Incidentally his visit caused much unwarranted speculation: Toto, the Neapolitan comedian, signed the visitors' book with his sprawling signature on the same day, and rumour was rife that an Anglo-Jugoslav pact was imminent. News-starved journalists quickly published the story that Tito had been lunching with the P.M.

The following day the sea was choppy when Mr. Attlee went to see the Blue Grotto, and there were sympathetic cries of "Poverino" from the locals, as they watched the Deputy Prime Minister and his staff, dressed sombrely in their London suits and black hats and sitting uneasily in a tiny cockleboat at the entrance to the grotto. They looked desperately serious as they enjoyed the sights but the rough motion made them remarkably green. Their guide did not help matters by singing Neapolitan love songs in the grotto itself, thus providing much unwanted local colour for the distinguished visitors.

The next minor invasion of Capri was by a group of important enemy subjects, who were sent there by the Allies in May of last year. Schacht, von Hesse, Horthy's son and Schuschnigg were all there for a short time, but then vanished as silently as they had come.

Now, with the war over and the troops gone, Capri has again become a pleasant place to visit. The flashy pre-war society is dead and gone; Edda's hideous villa stands deserted and Curzio Malaparte's red horror has been quietly sub-let. You can still spot an occasional marquis sipping his iced coffee in the Piazza, but there is no longer a jazz band there to rend the still night air. The moon shines once more upon a quiet scene, as the fishing boats with twinkling lights put out into the bay below. Edwin Cerio, who tried to make of Capri an international centre for intellectuals under the League of Nations, still sits in his study writing about the island's flora and fauna. He says that he expects his friend Norman Douglas to return soon. If he does, he will find that the old life has not all been shattered. Blue lizards still lie on the warm stones in the sun, bees hum in the flowers and the sea is still uniquely and wonderfully blue.

RUSSIA HARDENS

(This concludes a despatch from our Moscow correspondent. The first part was published last week.)

The "hardening" of Government policy in relation to art and literature is the most obvious example of what is happening. Michael Zoschenko, "who wrote vulgar and libellous lampoons on Soviet reality," and Anna Akhmatova, who is "an out-moded drawing-room poetess who believes in art for art's sake and hankers after the æsthetic life of pre-revolutionary days," are thrown out of the Writers' Union. Nobody will print them again, unless they have a fundamental change of heart. They are deprived of the privileges to which the three thousand writers of the Union are entitled. The whole matter naturally greatly transcends in importance the Zoschenko story about the monkey. It is meant as a warning to every other writer. They must write propaganda in the wide and even in the narrow sense of the word. The task of literature is to instil Communist consciousness into the people, especially into the younger generation; it must make them love their Soviet motherland more than ever. The Soviet people's deeds in the war and their aspirations in the peace are declared to be sufficiently wide a subject for any writer. All escapism is declared to be bad, whether it be escapism into the historical past, or into one's own private self, or into "pure art." A great highbrow poet like Pasternak (whose calibre is equal to that of Rilke or T. S. Eliot) is mentioned in passing in the resolution of the Writers' Union as a man who is "idealess" and "divorced from the realities of the Soviet people."

It is the same with the theatre. The Central Committee of the Communist Party has the strongest views on the function it must perform. No doubt ballet and opera will continue much as before—though here, too, it is said, it was high time some decent operas on Soviet themes were produced. There is a strict injunction that every theatre must produce at least two or three new Soviet plays per year, and, what is more, not treat them as second-class shows, but put their best producers and actors into them. Dramatists have been getting hell for not working hard. Everybody is now writing plays. I don't know whether this will produce great art, but this much one can say: Soviet writers have been with few exceptions extremely slow and lazy; for, whatever they do, they have few bread and butter worries. A shake-up may produce something.

In the cinema, too, there is a terrific drive against escapist films, against "entertainment for entertainment's sake." War films, industrial films, inspiring films, films that will make you work and love your Socialist country will be produced in a big way. As few as possible filmed fairy tales, light comedies, screen versions of classical plays. No hankering for Hollywood. The model can be seen everywhere. It is *The Oath*, a two-hour film about the progress of the Soviet people in peace and war, under Stalin's leadership. If there are to be funny films, they, too, must not be "idealess."

It is the same in art. Alexander Gerasimov, the painter laureate, was the other day praising the British Royal Academy and denouncing Picasso and Matisse as degenerates, and saying that he himself was a realist in the sense Gogol is a realist. He scorned the idea of showing Picasso and Matisse (though Russia has an enormous collection of these) to the Russian people. Gerasimov may be an extreme case, but he is the man whose counsel matters. One might argue that people don't want inspiring films and would prefer funny films or Deanna Durbin. But that depends entirely on their mood; and, if they hear much more about warmongering speeches abroad and come to believe firmly in capitalist encirclement, they will want to see inspiring films, just as they wanted to see them during the war. If a year ago there were masses of distinguished Russians to celebrate the third anniversary of *Britansky Soyuznik* (the British Weekly, published by the Embassy here) the celebration of its fourth anniversary last month was, in fact, ignored by many guests.

LULLABY

Lie lightly, love.
The late swifts fly
Above the wires
Sweeping black wings
Across a red and feathery sky.
Lie lightly, love.
When all the fires
Have blazed in the blood
And the flesh flakes like ash from the breast,
Then the heart sings,
For the heart is at rest.
Lie lightly, love.

Lie lonely, love,
And lonely too am I.
The red thunder
Blunders round the sky.
The hand finds only
The boundary between you and me;
Yet the hand wonders
To feel what is other than hand,
To know what is other than self.
The clouds are ruled like sand;
The lightning shines brightly
But the sky gives no reply.
Lie lonely, love,
Yet, lonely love, lie lightly.

Norman Nicholson

RAIMU

THERE is now another little hole in the wall, through which the east wind can whistle. Raimu is dead. I shall go on enjoying French films, I hope, but I shall never look forward to them with the same old eagerness, not without Raimu. I never understood more than about a sixth of what he said, but still he was my favourite film actor. (As he was also the favourite of some of my actor friends, themselves famous on the films.) Take equal portions of Ralph Richardson and Charles Laughton, mix and season well and allow the mixture to mature, then add a rich Southern French dressing—and you have Raimu. He was that rare and satisfying type, the big juicy Frenchman.

Even in poor films—and I saw him in one, new to me, only three months ago, in Berne—his own performance never disappointed you. He might be shoddily tricked out as a crook with a heart of gold, in an unreal bit of nonsense, yet he created his own reality, gave the sagging stuff a lift, and by a tone, a look, a cunning entrance or exit, persuaded you that you were seeing something human and good. He had, as Ralph Richardson has, a ripe earthiness lit with magic, for which I would gladly exchange all the romantic profiles in the world. Like all the tragi-comedians, he conjured you into the mood when you do not know whether to laugh or to cry. He was always larger, more massive, infinitely heavier than all the players round him, and yet he offered more light and shade than they did. His crooks were his least important creations, just as the films that presented them were of no merit, and yet even his crooks had moments of sudden startling ferocity and then other moments of weariness and despair, shown in his great sagging back, that turned these routine characters, if only for a few seconds, into new Macbeths. His rich *bourgeois* figures, as in *Le Roi S'Amuse*, were wonderful studies of complacency and self-approval, touched by doubt and a kind of wondering wistfulness. There was in the best of them too, that hint of a knowing gleam, possessed by all the great comic actors, which suggested that this dupe and butt was at least the equal of his audience in intelligence, tipping us the wink that we are all dupes and butts in our turn.

I never saw him in *Marius*, which we are told was his greatest triumph, and I think he will remain longest in my memory as the uxorious baker in *La Femme Du Boulanger*. Here again I would say that he gave the tale a lift that removed it from the region of rather primitive rural manners, giving it a breadth and symbolism. His baker, so proud of his craft, so bewitched and bewildered by his wife's beauty, so helpless in his fall, so inarticulate and wistful when beauty, robbed of its earlier bloom, came home (and remember how he produced the little cake shaped like a heart), was Man himself, the artist and boastful fool, the betrayed animal and the immortal maker. And if the film cast a longer shadow than the original tale, that was because Raimu brought to it his own genius.

There were many fine French films in which Raimu had no part, but much as I enjoyed the performances of Baur, Jouvet, Francen and the rest, I was always hoping that Raimu would turn up somehow, that the stout man in the restaurant or the man behind the newspaper in the café or the civic dignitary at whose office door we waited would suddenly reveal those familiar heavy features, the pendulous lower lip, the haunted eyes and lost look of the born tragi-comedian. Even if there was no mention of his name, I hoped to hear again those hoarse tones, now rumbling and dubious, now suddenly snapping into ferocity, now rising to *bonhomie*. It is true that I never understood more than one word in six of his dialogue, but he contrived to suggest such a warmth and richness of life that I felt I was listening to some of the finest speeches in the world. The very gaps in some of his films, the sequences I never quite followed, seem better in retrospect than whole admired epics from Hollywood. Though only in this land of shadows, I had met a character; and in that great glittering world of Super-productions and Colossal Stars and Unmatched Brilliance of Talent, I had the luck to run across an artist.

Because he played in films we have not entirely lost him at one stroke. We can magically command him to return out of those flat tins of film, and show us again his warmth and rich humanity and massive deliberate art. But the copies will soon dim and fray; that hoarse voice will be harder to understand; those heavy features will fade until at last we shall not be able to see him push out his lower lip again. The French are good at monuments: they should erect one to the memory of this player, who reminded us so often, in the darkening Thirties, that France had known a Rabelais, a Molière, a Balzac, that the old spirit had not flickered out entirely but could light up a cinema screen for an hour or two.

So Old Raimu has gone, lumbering off the set like a wondering bear for the last time, and the gap he has left will not be filled in a hurry, for me, by Cocteau's romantic spectres or by Existentialist performers. Come—my cloak, for there is now another little hole in the wall, through which the east wind whistles.

J. B. PRIESTLEY

MOVIES

"Spectre of the Rose," at the Astoria
"The Green Years," at the Empire
"Festival of French Films," at the Scala

Spectre of the Rose doesn't, alas, deserve the triple stars it has been getting. True, there is nothing else to recommend, and in idea, at any rate, one welcomes the free hand given—so we are informed—to Mr. Ben Hecht in making this film. Several years ago he achieved a pat piece of atmospherics with the empty title, *Angels Over Broadway* (commercial touch!); now he is allowed and even encouraged to do as he likes. As a mark of distinction his film is put on at the Astoria; queues stretch round towards Soho; the audience is obviously not that which, last week, responded to *Her Kind of Man;* short, tall, we arrange ourselves so that there shall be no hats in front or whispers behind; the curtains part; there is a clever opening shot of a man mounting stairs and gesturing to himself; he opens a door, instantly alert—an affected impresario in a room where they are rehearsing ballet; and there, I am sorry to say, excitement ends. Tediously, in conversation, the portrait of a great dancer gone mad is sketched in, and then we meet him in person, not great at all, interesting perhaps for the strange moods in which he has murdered one wife and will attempt the same with another. He will stage a come-back with *Spectre of the Rose* (not Weber's, though!), the ballet that first provoked his mania. There are towards the end genuine flickers of fear, but neither psychologically nor dramatically does the tragedy go deep. Among all these shadows the caricature of the old balletomane (Michael Chekov) begins amusingly but is worn thin. Mr. Hecht can, as we all know, write substantial dialogue, but now and then he indulges a lyricism that is about as appetising as hot marmalade poured over galantine. "You are an exclamation mark after the word 'beauty'"—so the poet of the piece greets his lady love. No wonder she turns away in loathing. But soon afterwards with her mad dancer she wallows in a verbiage no less repulsive. Life and art come in for a spattering. This theatrical lingo of Mr. Hecht's was partly concealed in *Angels Over Broadway* by the fact that the chief character was a dramatist always drunk. Probably also one notices it more in the present film because for long stretches there is little else to occupy the attention.

The Green Years, on the other hand, had been so severely dealt with by reviewers that a special advance performance was given on Monday to a "select audience," each of whom was provided with a stamped postcard on which to register his or her opinion. I can't say that I should have backed M.G.M.'s

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conviction that this is "the film of all the years." Dr. Cronin has provided a lavishly sentimental piece about an orphan growing up in Scotland to become a doctor. Local colour is splashed about in the matter of accents, and all the characters go round humming the tunes of old Scotland. Since a small boy has to attain years of discretion Dr. Cronin has no difficulty in packing together school anecdotes, deaths, love affairs, railway accidents, Highland flings, etc., to fill a couple of hours or so. The first hour is best when Granpaw goes through his paces as sort of fat sentimental Ancient Pistol. Mr. Charles Coburn, heavily disguised, is very endearing; so much so that, after a time, his appearances become the signal for everybody else to step aside. However, his burning nose remains longer with me than the mincing gestures of the ballet-master, and altogether, despite its heavily synthetic appeal, I preferred *The Green Years* to *Spectre of the Rose*.

The "Festival of French Films" began its fortnight at the Scala on Monday by showing Renoir's *La Règle du Jeu*, a curious exploration of idle lives that develops a wild fantasy with revels in a country house. Two films will be shown daily, at 3.0 and 6.30, and the programme includes *Le Ciel est à vous* (Gremillon), *Feu Mathias Pascal* (L'Herbier), *Angèle* (Pagnol), *Les Deux Timides* (Clair), and Rouquier's *Farrebique*, a new film not yet seen in Paris. An exhibition arranged by Cavalcanti accompanies the film-shows, which are open to the public.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

TWO GOOD PAINTERS

THE Camden Town Group represents the most coherent, valuable and fruitful movement in English painting during the last hundred years. It effected a revolution, yet was wonderfully unencumbered by self-advertisers, by mere theorists, or even by the usual rearguard of well-meaning duffers. I thought that the only surviving foundation-member of the group was Mr. Ginner, but Roland, Browse and Delbanco are showing pictures by Mr. William Ratcliffe, who was only a name to me. He was born in 1870, and worked chiefly on designs for wallpaper till he met Gilman in 1908. The latest picture in this show is dated 1921, so that his career as a painter seems to have been short—more's the pity, for he is a sensitive and highly skilled artist. His work displays the usual Camden Town taste for London back-gardens and dingy wallpapered attics. No need to *talk* about the artist's power to turn sows' ears into silk purses: the pictures quietly demonstrated the delightful fact. Mr. Ratcliffe's picture of Hampstead Garden City ought to be in the Tate as a classic instance of transmutation. Flowers and fruit were the only intrinsically amiable subjects that the Camden Towners usually allowed themselves, and Mr. Ratcliffe's Still Lifes are beautiful. Exemplary also is a figure in a landscape, justifiably entitled "Sunlight." It is indeed a pleasure to discover, even so late in his career, a new English painter whose sense of design and command of tone are almost unfailing.

In the same gallery is work by Mr. Josef Herman, a refugee who has chosen to depict life in a Welsh mining village. His drawings, very much more successful than his paintings, express authentically, without melodrama, the grimness of the subject.

Miss Vera Cuningham, who has a show at the Adamas Gallery, is an artist better known to connoisseurs than to the public. She is distinguished above all by the generosity of her painting, the large baroque rhythms and sumptuous, glowing colours. Her experiments in imaginary landscape seem to me wild, not to say empty, but the Still Lifes and nudes and portraits are no less accomplished than imaginative. Incidentally they are pictures of the sort that look even better in the home than in an exhibition.

ROGER MARVELL

RADIO NOTES

STRAUSS is by no means the first great composer who has turned in old age from the large, spectacular forms of music to the brief, the compressed and the intimate. One thinks of Elgar, of Brahms, even of Beethoven (despite the sketches for the Tenth Symphony), and of Wagner, who after *Parsifal* talked much of the symphony he did not after all live to write. In the case of Strauss, these very late instrumental works come as something of a surprise, for one had always thought of him as essentially a dramatic composer. What, after the *Metamorphosen*, would his *Oboe Concerto* be like? Personally, I was prepared for an exhibition of consummate writing, but not for the delicious freshness of this piece—a freshness not impaired by the "old-fashioned" harmony, nor yet created by anything very new in the way of melodic material. It is in the approach to his material—and to the form—that Strauss shows this last flicker of the brilliant imagination which distinguished his finest period of composition. If this concerto is pastiche, then the style is wonderfully realised. All passion spent, the veteran composer seems to have recaptured, for a season, the lyricism of his youth. This work is essentially a *scena*, a Weberesque conversation piece in which the solo discourses just above the level of the beautifully polite orchestral chatter. No voice is ever allowed to get in the way of another. Only in the Finale does the oboe voluntarily join in the conversation, by which time the talk has become sensibly less good: the wit is spent, and the charming anecdote is over. But what pleasure this music gives, with its ease and certainty of aim, its lovely texture! The playing of Léon Goossens was like the unwinding of a skein of silk. The concerto should be recorded without delay.

Since my own protests have been in vain, I wish somebody else could persuade the B.B.C. that their method of dealing with concert-hall applause is pointless as well as irritating. What object can there be in permitting this hideous noise to reverberate at full volume, and for minutes at a time, through listeners' rooms? If the aim be to show how successful are the musical programmes sponsored by the Corporation, the ruse is childish; yet I can see no other explanation. The other day the applause was even kept on as a background to the announcer's chit-chat about the next work on the programme, so that when it was again faded up to full strength one was in doubt as to what was being applauded—Sir Arnold Bax (whose Seventh Symphony was to come), the people of the U.S.A. (to whom it was dedicated), the World's Fair (for which it was written)—or merely Mr. Louis Kentner, who had, just before all this, been playing in a concerto.

The Plough and the Stars. A finely acted broadcast, but one in which not even the most careful production could convey the poetic squalor, the sinister gloom of the stage picture. This is a powerful play in which, it seems to me, the language—picturesque and eloquent as it often is—just fails to raise the whole thing to the level of true tragedy; leaving us merely wretched at the waste and injustice and misconception depicted. Still, a fine play, always worth reviving. I wish we could hear Miss Maureen Delaney more often; she is a formidable actress and her voice is magnificent.

Congratulations to Boyd Neel for drawing attention to D'Indy's charming *Triple Concerto*. This work must not be allowed to drop out of the repertory. The performance was admirable, for the Boyd Neel orchestra is now among the very best in the country.

P.S.—From now on I propose to drop the "Recommendations" with which I have hitherto concluded these Notes. With the institution of the Third Programme it would seem superfluous to point out the most interesting broadcasts in the day, unless the list were to be made much longer and more detailed than is feasible. Moreover, the new programme promises to provide so much material which is in the best sense controversial, that I shall need the whole of this column in order to do anything like justice to the week's broadcasts.

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Engraving specially designed by John Farleigh

Why short in 1946?

Even were the stills of Scotland "going strong" today it would yet take years to mature the whisky. So existing stocks of Johnnie Walker must be sparingly used in order to avoid greater shortage later on. *All good whisky is rare. Johnnie Walker is rare good whisky.*

BOOKS IN GENERAL

To-day we are thinking happily and hopefully of Jawaharlal Nehru as the first Premier of a free India. Incarnated in this man, his country after nearly two centuries of alien rule has recovered the use of her will. But here is a book,* fresh from the press, which he wrote in prison and the date below its preface is one of the last days of last year. So quickly has he stepped from impotence to power. I remember vividly my first impressions of him. I was allowed to meet him, many years ago, in the keep of an old Moghul fortress, during one of his earlier imprisonments. I noted his quick step, his athletic frame and the swiftness of his nervous reactions as we talked. This was a man, I felt, whom Nature had designed for adventure and action, though she had given him also a sensitive gift of speech and an artist's delight in the world around him. There may be contemplative scholars who can adapt themselves fairly easily to a prisoner's life, if they have books and paper, but in spite of his love of literature and science Nehru is by temperament rather a fighter and a leader than a student. In prison he turned to history as others have done before him.

It was in the Tower that Raleigh wrote his *History of the World*. Out of the Bastille came Voltaire's historical epic, the *Henriade*. Condorcet was not yet a prisoner behind locked doors, when he wrote his *Sketch* of human history, surely the most hopeful book that ever came from a thinker's pen, but he was in close confinement, hiding from the Terror in an attic of a friend's house. It is easy to understand why the prisoner makes his escape into history. No locks can bar his way into the past, nor forbid his intercourse with his forerunners. On this vast stage he may act vicariously and listen in his silent cell to the tramp of the legions in whose ranks he once served. In prison Nehru could see no longer the panorama of India's mountains and rivers that he loved. It was only her moons, as he tells us on a moving and beautifully written page, that came and went across his field of vision. Sometimes in the garden where he was allowed to dig, his spade would uncover fragments of her past—once an exquisitely carved lotus, and then the foundations of a disused gallows-tree. And so he set to work consciously and methodically to create for himself out of the stores of memory an image of the Mother-India for whose sake he lay in prison. *The Discovery of India* is not a formal history, though it ranges over the five thousand years that stretch from the prehistoric urban civilisation of the Indus Valley down to the "Quit India" movement of Congress in 1942. Rather is it an attempt to discover the sacred thread of identity that ran through all these centuries and made out of Aryans and Dravidians, Muslims and Hindus in some sense a single people amid the Babel of their differences.

It was to the earlier part of this long record that I found myself turning with the keenest interest, for Nehru has the gift of imaginative divination. The story, first of the Moghul and then of the British Empire, is not difficult to grasp, and here there was nothing unexpected in his narrative. But how did the fusion of Aryan and Dravidian come about? How did the way of life we call Hinduism arise, and why was it stereotyped into a rigid system of caste? Nehru, who wisely tells us little about the rise and fall of ephemeral kingdoms, is chiefly concerned with the growth of Indian cultures and the evolution of social life. If he leaves the reader still in perplexity over many questions which scholars are only beginning to explore, at least he helped me to realise why Indian history is so puzzling to the European mind. He quotes in this connection a talk he had some years ago with Malraux, who was puzzled, as we all are, to account for the total victory of Hinduism over Buddhism. Still as one travels over India the glories of the Buddhist millennium are there for all to see—the sculptures, the reliefs, the frescoes, the ruins of splendid buildings. One encounters in these monuments something even more impressive than the beauty of a noble and original art. They are inspired by the ethical outlook of a great humanistic movement—its mercy, its sense for equality, its ideal of contemplative peace. Though it turned its back on the pomps and vanities of this world of illusion and condemned the quest for power, it did not disdain gaiety and humour. If the first impression one draws from the frescoes, which many generations of Buddhist monks painted in the Ajanta caves, is of the grace and vitality of their artistic achievement, there soon follows a perception of something even more welcome. These scenes from the daily life of the early centuries of our era depict a happy society, gracious, at ease and free—a happier society than India ever knew before, or since. And so from the little we can be sure of, it must have been. Asoka's reign of peace is still a living tradition. And was not Buddhism at once a social revolution and a religious reformation, which broke the power of the Brahmins, combated superstition, taught a rule of charity and love and liberated the lower castes? So vital was it that it spread, as no other Indian creed has ever done, to the farthest regions of Asia. Why then did Hinduism return in a triumphant Brahminical Counter-Reformation?

We Europeans try to help ourselves to understand these Indian movements by using such words as Reformation and Counter-Reformation. But how inappropriate they are! There never was an Indian Luther who nailed his thesis to a temple door nor an Indian Pope who excommunicated this heretic. Neither then nor since was Hinduism an organised Church. It has no hierarchy: it has no creed. All that happened was that the Buddha sat under a tree and preached to his disciples, who then carried his gospel far and wide and in course of time lived it and taught it in their monasteries and universities. We can guess that something resembling a class-struggle underlay the religious movement. The caste of rulers and warriors, the *Kshatriyas*, were resisting the claim to supremacy of the priestly and intellectual caste, the Brahmins. They welcomed Buddhism, with its agnostic philosophy, which made an end at once of caste and of clerical tyranny. We Europeans see for a moment something familiar here—the struggle between the secular and the ecclesiastical power, which was for Voltaire the key to all the history of our Continent. But no Indian Thomas à Becket was ever murdered in some Canterbury beside the Ganges, and no Emperor ever did penance in an Indian Canossa. Nor were there Bartholomew massacres, or Smithfield fires, or wars of religion, or edicts of Nantes. History in India is the record of the working of anonymous and unorganised forces, sometimes at a prince's court, more often in the villages. Nehru offers two answers to Malraux's question. First, Buddhism did not wholly perish: it left some traces behind it—the creed of non-violence and vegetarianism. Secondly, it perished only after it became corrupt—for not only did it take to worshipping the Buddha as a god; it admitted other gods and godlings, less innocent and less admirable. Once it came to a competition in priestcraft and superstition, the Brahmins with their hereditary prestige were bound to win.

So caste came back in a more rigid form than ever before, and with it the Brahminical monopoly of India's intellectual life. More persuasively, because more soberly than any Indian writer I know, Nehru describes what Indian culture attained at its height—its gracious art, its brilliant innovations in mathematics, its literature, its metaphysics, its grammatical scholarship and above all, what most of us forget, its adventures overseas, which carried it as a civilising influence to Java and Cambodia. Why, round about the tenth century of our era, did its vitality begin to wither, first in the North and much later in the South? Nehru dismisses the usual complacent answer, which traces the decay to foreign invasions. These Indians could have resisted, had not the degeneration already begun. It was the restoration of caste that froze the social structure into rigidity, broke Indian contacts with the outer world and checked the spirit of adventure alike in the mental and physical life of this people. Indian civilisation lost its dynamic and will not recover it till caste, with all its fetters and degradations, is a thing of the past.

This big volume is difficult to review, for it is several books bound together. It is busied with much more than the historical origins of Indian culture. It opens with an autobiographical fragment. It contains a full account of the rise of Congress and its development under Gandhi's leadership. It ends with a series of chapters in which Nehru defines in outline his attitude towards most of the basic problems of our day. This will be for most of his readers the most important section of a book which errs on the side of attempting too much. The man who wrote it in prison was already, after Gandhi, by far the most beloved and popular figure in the India of our time, the model to whom every young Hindu looks up, while even in these days of bitterness the Muslims feel for him a measure of respect and admiration. Here are the ideas that will inspire the policy of India's first premier, at home and abroad. These chapters are the work of a sensitive and reflective mind, steeped in the culture of the West but with its roots deep in India's own soil.

Nehru remains in this book the uncompromising opponent of British Imperialism. He indicts it for the "deliberate part" it played in "creating disruption" among Indians. He traces to it the arrested growth not merely of India's industry, but of her social structure, which could not freely adapt itself to modern conditions, while it remained under foreign rule. It perpetuated the influence of groups and institutions which had no vital functions left—notably the feudal princes. Generation after generation, as a *Herrenvolk* "with a God-given right to govern," it subjected "India as a nation and Indians as individuals" to insult and humiliation. And so no solution which rests on "the retention of India as part of the British Empire has the slightest chance of acceptance."

In his outlook for India it is evident that Nehru dreads the conservative force of religion. Of the orthodox Hindu he says bluntly that he is "more concerned with what to eat and what not to eat than with spiritual values. The rules and regulations of the kitchen dominate his social life." Caste he rejects without qualification. For him Socialism means more than a planned society, more even than a democratic collectivism. He insists that it must "aim at equality." Only as incomes tend "towards equalisation" will class distinctions fade out. He insists that "special opportunities for educational, economic and cultural growth" must be given to "backward groups"—presumably the aboriginal tribes and the untouchables. Finally, he is for basing the franchise on the village by a method of indirect election—in short, the Soviet system.

Nehru is optimistic over the prospects of a rapid development of India's economic resources. He argues from the accumulation of vast sterling assets during the war "that planned development under a free National Government would completely change the face of India within a few years." But he means to avoid the perils of a concentration of industry in great towns.

Against Pakistan he states a powerful case, though he does it temperately. I am not sure that he grasps what it chiefly is that Muslims fear—the power of Hindu big business. But that some compromise may be inevitable, he clearly does realise. He ends on a characteristic note. In spite of all the mistakes his generation of Indians may have made, "we have saved outselves from triviality and an inner shame and cowardice."

H. N. Brailsford

* *The Discovery of India.* By Jawaharlal Nehru. *Meridian Books.* 25s.

THE PLEASURES OF HISTORY

The Use of History. By A. L. ROWSE. *Hodder and Stoughton.* 4s. 6d.

The old question about how much history would have been changed if Cleopatra's nose had been differently shaped is capable, I've always thought, of a fairly satisfactory answer. If Mark Anthony besotted had not overstayed his leave in Egypt, there would still have been a Roman Empire because Rome was ready, economically, politically and technically for dictatorship at home and abroad. Also, the Empire would have broken up, probably in much the same time, under the dual forces of internal decay and the external pressure of migratory tribesmen. But the immediate surface history of Rome would have been much changed if Anthony had been victorious at the battle of Actium. Or take another illustration of the Marxian problem of economic and geographic underlying factors versus personal and accidental ones. If one can imagine a precocious Marx, who was a contemporary of Burke, he too would have seen that the situation after the Revolution would throw up a military dictator to lead France; he might also have foreseen Babeuf's proletarian revolt which, he would have known, could not succeed in the midst of a middle-class revolution. A Marxian analysis would also have shown that national movements would be strengthened throughout Europe by the revolutionary wars. But neither Marx, Burke or anyone else could have guessed that the military dictator of France would be a genius of the first rank who would carry the war as far as Moscow and wage war for half a generation against a coalition of all the other Powers with far-reaching effects on all the subsequent history of Europe. We can say, if we accept, as Mr. Rowse and I both do, the basic historic analysis of Marx, that the period of nationalism and of middle-class States would have come, Napoleon or no Napoleon, and that it was inevitably followed by the period of proletarian upheaval, but no one foretold or could foretell that Russia would be the scene of the first proletarian revolution or that the atom bomb would be first used by America and not by Germany. Mr. Rowse very sensibly (but not, as he suggests, for the first time) says that there are therefore two kinds of history and that much of the Marxist controversy is pointless because it fails to recognise that the two schools are not mutually exclusive. The philosophic historian, dealing with long sweeps of time, must find that events are shaped less by human will than men imagine; he tends to be a determinist, while the historian of the surface stream of events must assume freewill in his historical characters.

Only one, the most interesting chapter in this book, deals with rival philosophies of history. In general the book is written for the increasingly large reading public which cannot be satisfied with the answers that Brains Trusts can give to its questions. It is a good first volume of a series "Teach Yourself History," which Mr. Rowse is himself editing. It deals with the content and the poetry of history, with the exciting pleasures of exploring one's own countryside to find where the Roman road went, what happened in the medieval village, who lived at the manor, and what can be learnt from local records. It discusses history, not only as the key to current politics, but also as the key to the enjoyment of everyday life, and it contains much good advice about keeping a notebook or how to read books.

Mr. Rowse writes with knowledge, and enthusiasm. His fault is an apparently irrepressible egotism. Where he is telling us about the Cornwall of his childhood's experience he is always relevant and interesting. When he becomes didactic in his later chapters I fear that many of his readers will find him—well, I leave readers to choose their own adjective. Here, for instance, is a paragraph that it seems to me a Fellow of All Souls should have refrained from writing:

> How to describe the charm of a society like All Souls, where there is a body of men to whom, taken together, no period is alien? I can only repeat what a political friend of mine has said—that he does not bother to look up the encyclopædia: he knows that when he comes down into the common-room there will be bound to be somebody who can answer his question. We may not all be able to inhabit an All Souls; but we can all of us read and find friends of like interests.

Apart from the question whether this is not a little hard on All Souls conversation, is there not something here of Mr. Collins, comforting us for not dining with Lady Catherine de Burgh?

KINGSLEY MARTIN

A GRAPE TRIFLE

My Dear Bunny. By G. W. STONIER. *Home and Van Thal.* 3s. 6d.

Leaving aside such whales as the Sistine chapel and the Dnieper-Petrovsk Dam—leaving aside such middling affairs as a Kent mantelpiece, a sonnet, a small yacht etc., and getting down to a matter of snuff boxes, limericks, soups, *mousses*, fountain pens, proverbs, and such like—even in such trifles as these the difference between the first rate and all the rest is abysmal. For a first-rate thing is a different sort of creature from its fellows. Actually its only fellows are other first-rate things. So that a Meissonier watch case, for instance, is more like a passage from Itma or a Laurel and Hardy dive over bannisters, than it is like a watch-case from Ingersoll.

Does this mean that there is a common denominator of first-rate trifles? Yes. It does. A first-rate trifle is as it were a grape, the surface skin barely able to contain the fruit itself that plumps it out so alarmingly fully, and that has such an unmistakable flavour bursting from it.

I am not trying to say that this work of Mr. Stonier's is a trifle—although it is only thirty-two pages long, and addressed to a rabbit. But rather it is a grape, as defined above. Or a russet apple shall we say. From the moment that we are shown from the train window as it leaves London "the cauliflower clouds unbundling in slow motion," and become aware of the awful wind; notice the "rose bush twitching in the yard," and see the first sorry-looking field of the country, we recognise good writing. A feeling of relief. We are in the right carriage. And we sit happily back.

"Mr. S.," as the other characters in the book call him, goes down for a week-end, as one of several regular P.G.'s, to a farmhouse in the country. The first thing he does when he gets down there is to go, as is his habit, rabbit shooting—in a sort of way. The reader is taken along, too. He is also taken casually meandering with Mr. S. among his thoughts.

The first actual shot at the rabbit (missed) rattles us all, Mr. S., the reader, and the rabbit. "One is left shivering like a piano on which some inspired gollywog has crashed out the first bar of Beethoven's *Pathetic*." Then, when the echoes have died down, suddenly we see a raindrop . . . A storm is blowing up. Mr. S. takes shelter under some trees. He stands listening to the thunder "shunting around" . . . Then later back to the big family supper at the farmhouse. Nap and bridge follow, mingled with talk of local events, to the sound of the rattling of the bridge money in Mrs. Barclay's Elastoplast tin, not to mention the radio and the wildness of the thunderstorm. When a rare silence falls, "you could hear a swede drop," remarks Farmer Brant.

The transitions through all this from reverie to action, and back again to exhortations to the rabbit—these changes are rung with subtlety.

The sense of the storm all through the Saturday night is almost the chief delight. From the beginning of it with Mr. S. as he shelters, watching the "grubs floating by his nose suspended on long threads (if that's what they really are)" till where, during the game of nap it breaks into the house upstairs, and the party have to run up to mop the furniture and roll back the carpets before they can settle down in the warm sitting room again.

Sunday is fine and sunny. The little boy who was in bed last night gets up and joins the party. Also Joe, the cowman, "odorous as a fox," followed by his train of cats. And there is more rabbit shooting on the Sunday evening, wandering by "the ditch where under the lime tree the bramble catches at his sleeve." Twilight comes down . . . "a pigeon claps off through the trees." And the week-end in the country is over.

So it seems that this most enjoyable dessert is finished. We stretch out our hands to the finger bo—, we lick our paws I mean. Then at once ask for more, from the same garden, as soon as possible. But next time a bigger plateful, a much bigger plateful, please.

JULIA STRACHEY

MAXIM GORKI

Literature and Life. A Selection from the Writings of Maxim Gorki. *Hutchinson International Authors.* 12s. 6d.

When Maxim Gorki died in 1936 he was mourned by his countrymen as Russian Ambassador to the world at large. They mourned not merely because he had died but because they knew there was no one of his artistic stature to follow "the most Russian of the Russians" in the interpretation of their social experiment to the more or less hostile civilisation of Western Europe. This warm, mature and humane selection from his critical writings suggests to the reader in 1946 that they should also have mourned the passing of a gifted interpreter of Europe to Russia; there is greater need of that kind of envoy now.

In spite of the pseudonym he chose (Gorki means "bitter") and of the passion of his revolutionary ethics, he possessed as a critic a special and not very common kind of geniality. *Literature and Life* overflows with it. It is a pity that no less than a quarter of a book by so abundant a mind should be taken up by a long-winded introduction, the sincerity of which becomes dull through over-statement; it was clearly addressed to Russian patriotic sentiment during the war. I wish the translator or the publishers of the English edition had discreetly dropped half of it and left us the good things it contains; Gorki would not have suffered, and Mr. V. V. Mikhailovski would probably have been none the wiser.

This is not idle criticism, for long-windedness and excessive fervour are foreign to Gorki's own work. Fervour of the propagandist type has nothing in common with his particular passion, exemplified so well in these essays and fragments. Whether you agree with his judgments or not, Gorki the critic is a figure to command respect: he goes straight to the point in a plain style which has no room for dogmatism, spite, envy, preaching and other vices to which better critics than he have fallen victims. This book deals with the technical side of writing, with personal reminiscences, with foreign literature, with statements of policy addressed to Soviet writers, with aesthetics and cultural history: and there is not one evil or angry word in the whole of it. Gorki never wrote polemics—read the pieces in which he reviews Russian and foreign writers of the bourgeoisie.

The passion of his life was for justice—human, not divine—and the superiority of his mind lay in the acceptance of a hard truth—that this kind of justice is claimed by your enemies as well as your friends, otherwise it vanishes just when you are about to grasp it. The difference between Maxim Gorki and most revolutionaries is the difference between virtue and goodness. There was no messianic, self-crucifying "goodness" in him. He fought implacably against Tolstoyan "revelation" and the "submission" of Dostoevsky, without denying these writers and

his debt to them; but he had a type of mind rare enough among revolutionaries, above all seduction, earning the epithet "virtuous" in the sense used by Shaw when describing Caesar: "having virtue, he has no need of goodness."

The essays collected here date from 1896 to 1935. They reveal not only the enormous range of his reading (for which Tolstoy rebuked him), but in particular the fascinating processes by which a first-rate receptive mind illuminates and expresses itself through the books and personalities of others. The reminiscences of Tolstoy and Chekhov bring out this quality. The old prophet of passivity talks bawdily about women, puts off questions he can't answer with the formula, "that's a different matter altogether," reads one of his chapters and murmurs, "The old man has written this well, very well!" Facets of truth which others might have turned into mockery, but which here reveal with great artistry the humour and humanity of the sitter and the emotion and fidelity of the portraitist. There is a paragraph in which Gorki rubs his hands over the aristocrat in Tolstoy, that old "blue-bloodedness" which, resulting in a deadly grace and precision of thought, made the noses of his lackeys "go blue with an intolerable icy cold." An optimist himself, Gorki understood and valued the "quiet, cold despair" of Chekhov:

> Reading Anton Chekhov's stories is like going for a walk on a bleak afternoon in late autumn when the air is transparent and the bare trees, the crowded houses, and the grey people are all sharply outlined. Everything is strange, lonely, motionless and impotent.

Dostoevsky he saw as a genius equal to Shakespeare: he battled in his writings against what he called Dostoevsky's "slave ethics," but told young writers to study and cherish that "horrible grimace." He demolishes the pessimism of certain Western European writers—Verlaine, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Hardy, Mann and others—as the despair of prisoners in a bourgeois gaol, but while analysing the disgust of Verlaine and Flaubert he is not taken in by the egoism of Barrès, which to a shallower mind would seem to fit in with the energetic concepts of his own social realism. He believed the results of man's collective labours to be of greater value than any work of individual genius. The pessimist in his European corner may retort that the Dnieper Dam is replaceable, while Beethoven's *Grosse Fuge* and *Anna Karenina* are not; only to find that Gorki's enthusiasm for individual genius can be greater than his own.

In this selection some of the most interesting articles are about the technique of writing, which for Gorki meant also the technique of reading. Before studying the Russians he read the French writers, especially Flaubert, Balzac and Stendhal. As a young man he read *Un Coeur Simple* on the roof of a shed while hiding from a festive crowd:

> It was difficult to understand why the plain, familiar words put together by a man into a story about the uninteresting life of a servant moved me so. There was some incomprehensible trick concealed here and—I am not inventing this—almost involuntarily, like a puzzled savage, I held the pages up to the light as if to find the solution of the trick somewhere between the lines.

When he came to write he knew instinctively how to reject the facile and learn the difficult:

> I was afraid to write prose because it seemed to me that prose was much more difficult than verse; prose demanded especially sharp eyes, the ability to see and observe things invisible to others, and a certain exceptionally compact and powerful arrangement of words.

Gorki said that Korolenko taught him how to write. Tolstoy asked whether Korolenko was a musician, thereby perhaps revealing the gravest lack in Gorki's work—the sense of music—the most powerful influence on thought and style which consciously anti-bourgeois writers almost invariably fail to reflect.

In his early fiction Gorki approached closer than he may have liked to the pessimism of Western Europe. In his stories of vagrants and "*ex-hommes*" he hit upon the phenomenon of ennui. His character Konovalov shows that even he was never, for all his optimism, insensitive to the spleen of Baudelaire, to the jammed mainspring of Stavrogin, to Oblomovism and the disease of Byron's Don Juan. An optimist cannot believe in original sin, and it was natural for him to tear himself away from the *ex-hommes*, for he had divined from Dostoevsky and Baudelaire that if you believe in original sin you also come to believe in God. But in an essay written after the first Revolution and included here he returns to an analysis of Petrarch's *acedia*. Gorki never ran away—even from *Weltschmerz*.

His strength and weakness as an artist lay perhaps very close together. Very little escaped Tolstoy's keen old eyes. It was he who told Gorki: "When you invent characters, you get nothing but knights-errant, nothing but Siegfrieds and Amadises. . . . You are a very doubtful socialist. You are a romanticist and romanticists should be monarchists, that's what they've always been."

IVAN ROE

OUR BEAUTIFUL WEATHER

British Weather. By STEPHEN BONE. Britain in Pictures Series. *Collins.* 4*s.* 6*d.*

We may talk about it but we shall never see our weather as it is: that seems the conclusion of Mr. Bone's little investigation. There is the mystery of outside plumbing (5,000,000 burst pipes, we are told, in 1929). Who or what put them there? Ethiopians? Ladies with a kindness for nesting birds? Provident plumbers? Providence itself? It hardly does to ask. Without burst pipes and standing in pubs, promenade concerts and open-air Shakespeare we should not be the people we are. The Englishman thrives no less on discomfort than on the delusion that he is somehow following Nature.

Our delusion about summer, for example. We insist (those of us who lead well-regulated lives) on going away, preferably to the seaside, in July or August. July and August are notoriously wet months. Why, though, to the seaside? Because there—I can think of no other answer—wetness is more pervasive and unendurable than anywhere else. How many "bad summers" we endure in this fashion, bad only in the sense that they are like all the others we have experienced except a happy half-dozen! Yet the idea of summer as a succession of dazzling days remains—as Mr. Stephen Bone points out—our fixed standard. By that, every year as we unpack, we judge and complain.

In fact, our weather is "mild, wet, cloudy, windy and changeable" (these adjectives are backed by figures) and "almost independent of the season." During forty years the temperature fell on only four days below zero, and rose about a dozen times over 95 deg. The rain, too, is no more than middling. "Only a very small part of this country is as wet as Biarritz, Florence, or Florida." Rome has an annual rainfall of 32 inches against London's 25. There is, however, an abundance of dull drizzly days without measurable rainfall which can only be described by the wretched islanders as wet. A visitor approaching from the Channel passes from sunshine to a coast hugged by low grey cloud. At a thousand feet or so he could recover his fine day. Perhaps the restaurants of future will be able to offer floating sun-terraces to those among us who want to escape the consequences of latitude and longitude.

One such consequence—rheumatism—is mentioned by Mr. Bone, put off and never returned to. Instead he quotes W. H. Hudson, who

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JONATHAN CAPE

apparently "found all weather stimulating," and complains that the townsman no longer has a true sense of climate. Ought we, then, given our kind of weather, to stew in it and enjoy stewing? It would be more to the point, surely, to remark that the smoke-pall over cities, by cutting off ultra-violet light, predisposes people to illness. And the remedy for that is not in more country excursions but in electric power.

"Our weather is beautiful, constantly and continually beautiful . . ." No, no. Sometimes beautiful, more often dull. Constable's skies, "with couple colour" or dramatically threatening, but where is the artist of the dull flat soggy days, as indistinguishable as one plate of English cabbage from another? Art, however, should console and—with the summer drearily slipping away—one enjoys Cox's "Windy Day," Wilson Steer's "Summer Heat," a Millais rainbow, a Whistler fog.

"Wildness and wet, wildness and wet,
Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet!"
They will.

G. W. STONIER

NEW NOVELS

Before I Go Hence. By FRANK BAKER. *Dakers.* 9s. 6d.

Rogue Elephant. By WALTER ALLEN. *Joseph.* 10s. 6d.

The Blue Danube. By LUDWIG BEMELMANS. *Hamilton.* 8s. 6d.

Clean, Bright and Slightly Oiled. By GERALD KERSH. *Heinemann.* 7s. 6d.

It Breathed Down My Neck. By JOHN PUDNEY. *Lane.* 8s. 6d.

Mr. Baker's theme is a novelist trying to bring to life a man whose presence he feels in a derelict farmhouse visited on a summer afternoon in 1943. The original twist is to make the novelist's presence also haunt his victim in the past. The victim is an Anglo-Catholic priest, the novelist an Anglo-Catholic pacifist and a musician. A son of the dead parson, a bearded, homosexual man of action, his sister and a young painter appear at both levels of time. They do not tell the novelist that they knew his unwilling subject in the flesh. The novel is scrapped.

It is a big, Gothic theme. Where it is directly confronted, the writing is first-rate. The dead parson's spinster daughter, the idiot boy and his tortured, globe-trotting brother, the parson himself, are big, Gothic figures. The impact of the no-longer and the not-yet is at half-a-dozen points felt with unnerving weight. The novelist himself and his friends are unimpressive. Unconditionally exempted from participation in the war, they poke fun at the world outside, and there are little passages of tetchy satire. The quarrelling of the partners in a young marriage is sensitively handled (the dead priest rises up between the novelist and his wife). Their reconciliations are sometimes embarrassing. There is a faint coterie smell about almost everything that happens on the 1943 time-level. It is not the coterie smell which normally hangs about novelist heroes. It is the smell of Anglo-Catholic pacifism, an effluvium curiously mingled with the odour of sanctity. The private jokes and the fireside and bedroom small-talk come out of the psalms and the prayer-book. However, even this has its documentary value. Mr. Baker is a gifted writer, and we are all war-damaged more or less.

The coterie smell in Walter Allen's new book is gross, palpable and, of course, intended. Here also is a novelist hero, and this one drinks at the Fitzroy, the Marquis of Granby and the Café Royal.

> Mr. Henry Ashley, with his huge goblin head and crescent grin like a visor hiding a real face, saw himself as the enemy, as miching mallecho, which means mischief, as the test-tube of cholera bacillus that is broken into the water supply. He was safest at sherry parties where he had to stand like anyone else imprisoned in a milling throng . . .

Unattractive in every situation, he is improperly characterised as a rogue elephant, being neither old nor angry, neither solitary nor brave. The title applies better to the mad old gaffer at the house in Devonshire which Mr. Henry Ashley visits and upsets.

For my taste, there is too much grimace in the book. It did not grow, but was put together. Ashley is a satirical portrait, but a portrait of more than one man. He has altogether too many bad qualities. Elsewhere, too, the adhesive cracks. In a matter of weeks, the girl Audrey grows up from a child playing with her dolls to a mature young woman who sees through the hero with bitter clairvoyance. I think Ashley too powerful a catalyst for the experiment proposed. The skeleton in the cupboard at Swithins was already on its way to being exposed. The plot would have unfolded quite well without Ashley. Once on the stage, he stands firmly in the limelight and makes it difficult for the other characters to put their lines across.

Detailed comparisons between Ludwig Bemelmans, Erich Kästner and Jaroslav Hasek would bring to light a great deal about Central European humour and its difference from Anglo-Saxon humour, and therefore about humour in general. *The Blue Danube* is a suave and delicate portrayal of administrative stupidity and malice. It reminds us that these writers, too, have their "little man," but that they maul him as no English novelist would dare to maul him, and perhaps as no Englishman is mauled. Out of this mould stepped Kafka's bemused protagonist.

There is an islet in the Danube, submerged for half the year. In summer the Fischer family grow on it three or four crops of beer radishes. Administration rages. It happens to be wartime, and the administrators happen to be Nazis. The juvenile lead is a French prisoner. Two old women in black work a seesaw pump all day. The apoplectic, lecherous Gauleiter and his cronies watch them from a clock tower. There is a good bishop, a miraculous bomb, the timid, anxious clientèle of a beer-garden. The recipe cannot fail if the cook's touch is light, and no touch is lighter than Mr. Bemelmans'. The book contains, moreover, fourteen of the author's drawings reproduced in glossy colour.

Before the war artists of all kinds made a to-do about their isolation and the necessity of bringing art to the masses. Now there is a boom in art. You cannot get into a concert, buy a book or stand in front of a picture without being jostled. A glutted market has given place to an empty one, and, to keep their publishers occupied, established writers are turning out their rag-bags. Mr. Kersh promises us the contents of his filing cabinet of wartime notes in three or four instalments. Mr. Pudney has reissued the dual-purpose stories for which he is best known, together with "some pieces which nobody will buy . . . from the bottom drawer of my desk." *It Breathed down my Neck* is not the title of one of the stories. It is what Mr. Pudney says his stories do to him before he writes them. *Clean, Bright and Slightly Oiled* describes not a guardsman on Saturday evening, but the condition in which the orderly officer expects to find the bolt of your rifle.

I do not think Mr. Pudney's most characteristic pieces have stood up well to the passage of time. "Uncle Arthur," "The Boy who Saw Through," "Edna's Fruit Hat," are fantasies whose only satirical point now appears to be that elderly members of the suburban middle class are in general unimaginative, but that bright events do or may blossom among them. This point of view is no longer controversial. Mr. Kersh can make you laugh. He can also make you cry. He can

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Personal

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